Prem Nath Bazaz

THE HISTORY OF STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN KASHMIR

National Committee
for Birth Centenary Celebrations of
Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah

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BUDDHIST ,,
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STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN KASHMIR

THE HISTORY OF
STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN KASHMIR

CULTURAL AND POLITICAL

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY

PREM NATH BAZAZ

National Committee for Birth Centenary Celebrations of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah
Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan
Islamabad

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

INSIDE KASHMIR
AZAD KASHMIR
TRUTH ABOUT KASHMIR
WHITHER INDIA,
—**Towards Revivalism or Renaissance?**
ABDUL AHAD AZAD KASHMIRI,
—**Poet of Humanism**— (in Urdu)
GANDHISM, JINNAHISM, SOCIALISM „

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Dedicated

to the memory of known and unknown sons and daughters
of Kashmir who have bravely fought against religious
fanaticism, spiritual thraldom, ideological intoler-
ance, racial prejudice and political persecu-
tion and who have laid down their
lives for the cause of free-
dom from the earliest
times to the pre-
sent day.

★

Freedom

To become free, to end tyranny and to abolish superstition
This is my cherished dream, this my desire and this my slogan.

* * *

I have accepted the burden of ages on my head;
The angels of the heavens have shuddered at my doggedness
I have chewed steel, I have braved fire;
I have sipped the blood of my heart;
But this my head has not, till this day,
Bent low before any one else but thee.

—**Poet Azad Kashmiri.**

* * *

The *Bulbul* dotes on roses
On narcissus the bee,
Drunk with the joy of his native land
Is the Kashmiri.
Our native land, O Mahjur,
Is verily a lovely garden
We must love it dearly
We all must love it dearly.

* * *

The wailings avail thee not, O *Bulbul*,
Who will set thee free ?
Thy salvation thou hast to work
With thine own hands alone.

* * *

Birds of the garden are full of song
But each one strikes his own note.........

* * *

If thou wouldst rouse this habitat of roses
Leave toying with kettle-drums
Let there be thunder-storm and tempest, yes, an earthquake.

—**Poet Mahjur Kashmiri.**

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MAP

PREFACE

The State of Jammu and Kashmir is passing through a very difficult period of its history. Owing to the dispute between India and Pakistan over the accession issue conditions of insecurity in the present and uncertainty about the future exist in the country such as have never been witnessed by the State people for more than a century. Consequently all classes of Kashmiris, barring the few members of the ruling clique, suffer hardships and misery.

The accession issue has escaped solution so far. Ignorance is the mother of all problems and therefore among the ways of settling them the best is to let the people concerned know as much about them as possible. The Kashmir dispute has become complicated because neither the Indians nor the Pakistanis are shown all sides of the picture. Interested politicians in either country incite only the baser passions and deep-rooted prejudices of their backward and semi-educated countrymen, telling them falsehoods and half-truths about the affairs of the State. If the dispute is to be settled light must be thrown on all aspects of the issue and every point of view fully discussed to enable the people to distinguish between right and wrong.

This book is different from many that have been written on Kashmir during the past six years since the dispute started. It is not a propagandist's book; it does not present the problem of Kashmir or suggest a solution as would cater to the predisposition and wishful thinking of any party or community. Unlike other books it neither strives to prove that the State's accession to India is legally, constitutionally or morally justified because the Maharaja applied for it, as has been held by the rulers of India; nor does it support the view that the State must become part of Pakistan because without Kashmir Pakistan would be incomplete, as is frequently asserted by the prominent leaders of the Muslim League. It is the voice of one who believes that the future of Kashmir, owing to its past traditions and culture, is inextricably linked with both her neighbours.

But Kashmir belongs to Kashmiris and neither the Maharaja had, nor any outsider has, however powerful he may be, any right to dictate anything about its future.

The present dispute over the accession of the State has its roots in the past history of Kashmir. Unless therefore one is fairly acquainted with the cultural and political developments of the country during the early and medieval periods it is not easy to comprehend the currents and cross-currents underlying the accession dispute. I have therefore tried to present a connected history of the Freedom Movement of the people of Kashmir from the dawn of civilisation to our own times.

One of the aims in writing this book has been to explain the present political, economic and cultural position of Kashmir against its historical background. I have attempted to make an objective and dispassionate analysis of the accession dispute, not only in the context of the past history of the Valley, but also with a special reference to the developments during the two decades preceding the partition of India.

That the uncommom views expressed in this book are bound to raise controversies in the extremist circles in India as well as in Pakistan, I have little doubt. But I am equally sure that liberal and unbiased people in search of factual information and in quest of truth will find material in these pages that may help them to comprehend a problem which, if left unsolved for some more time, might endanger the peace of the 450 million people of the subcontinent, perhaps of the world.

Having myself been an actor in the drama of contemporary politics in the State, it has not been easy for me to shake off my likes and dislikes regarding parties and personalities which have appeared and disappeared since 1931. It has however been my endeavour to narrate everything, as far as is humanly possible, in an unattached manner without allowing any personal prejudice to befog the issues, and without twisting facts. I have tried to be extremely careful that my historical sense and devotion to truth do not get vitiated by my regard for party politics. I have expressed appreciation where I deemed it was deserved, and condemned where I thought condemnation was needed. How far I have succeeded it is for the reader to judge.

While expressing my own views clearly and unreservedly I have taken pains to verify every statement of fact made in the book. I have put the viewpoints of all political parties, leaders and workers in their own words whenever and wherever I have critically examined them. Nevertheless even after having taken these precautions if, unwittingly, I should have committed a mistake which causes pain to any one, none would be more unhappy than myself.

To the reader who is interested to learn more about Kashmir politics during the early part of the Dogra Rule or in the thirties of the present century when the powerful nationalist movement took roots, I would suggest my book *Inside Kashmir* which narrates the fascinating events of the period in all their details. The material used in chapters six, seven, eight and nine of the present volume has been taken and abridged from that book.

Delhi,
February 1954. Prem Nath Bazaz.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In writing the present volume I have consulted and taken help from many distinguished authors who preceded me and I have at places extensively quoted from their writings. I gratefully acknowledge my debt to all of them.

The reports of statements and speeches of the Indian leaders and the Kashmir Nationalists quoted in the volume have been taken from (1) the *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), (2) the *Statesman* (New Delhi), the *Times of India* (Delhi), and (3) the *Khidmat* (Srinagar); of the Pakistan and the Azad Kashmir leaders from (1) the *Dawn* (Karachi), (2) the *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) and (3) the *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore). I am under debt of obligation to the editors of these journals.

Some friends from the Valley and Azad Kashmir supplied me precious, reliable and unpublished information about the political, economic and social conditions in these regions during the past six years. Afraid if their identity is revealed they might be victimised by the men in power I prefer not to mention their names. Nonetheless I am beholden to them for their generous help.

My thanks are due to friends who read the manuscript in parts or all through before it went to the press; particularly I am indebted to S. K. Das, V. B. Karnik and Suyash Malik who made valuable suggestions many of which I have incorporated in the book.

I am obliged to my friend and colleague, Jagan Nath Sathu, who assisted me in correcting the press proofs. He also proposed certain sensible alterations at places which I have carried out.

Lastly I must thankfully mention the unstinted co-operation which the management of the Naya Hindustan Press gave me to get the printing completed in time.

The Author.

BOOK FIRST

BEFORE PARTITION OF INDIA

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The Author

CHAPTER ONE

FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN EARLY AGES

FREEDOM is a necessity without which an organism cannot grow. Whatever has life in Nature in however a rudimentary form must be free; else it will stagnate, decay and die. Plants, animals and men all struggle for freedom if kept under restrictions in any manner because it is in their nature to remain free or perish. From the very day that Man was born he started his fight for freedom because he found that he could not do as he willed. Forces of Nature thwarted him; therefore he battled against them. Man, nude, shelterless and ignorant was entirely unequipped to face the onslaughts of Nature. So were animals from whom he had descended. But he had one weapon which his arboreal ancestors did not possess; he was endowed with rational thinking; he could retain events in his memory, connect them and draw inferences from them for his own guidance. By constant observation and by making repeated experiences Man was successful in unravelling the deep mysteries of Nature and in defending himself against her vagaries. Thus gradually he learnt to clothe himself, to build houses for residence and to grow food. And in this way civilisation was born.

During the course of this struggle Man realised that as an individual he was not powerful enough to face the mighty Nature and that it was in co-operation with other fellow beings that he could achieve greater success against the dreadful foe. He therefore laid the foundations of the human society as an instrument for progress and promotion of his own happiness. Like all human creations society has proved to be a source of both good and evil. It has doubtless helped Man in his eternal struggle against the vagaries of Nature but it has also become instrumental in bringing him under the bondage of sturdier and stronger but selfish members of society. Since the dawn of civi-

lisation Man has therefore fought on two fronts to keep himself free. He has waged war against the high-handed members of his own society no less than against the blind forces of Nature.

A real freedom movement of any people can neither ignore the one front nor the other. But peculiar circumstances and the exigencies of times can force the fighters for freedom to lay greater emphasis on the one than on the other during different epochs of their history. Evidently it is easier to delve into the mysteries of Nature in a free society than in the one which is under bondage. For that reason the meaning of freedom to the common man in an enslaved country has come to be to live under a social democracy where the least possible restrictions exist on his thinking and movements.

The ideal of freedom and social justice has had several interpretations from age to age. It has developed through the centuries. The conception of freedom that we cherish now was not present in the minds of the people of Kashmir even half a century ago nothing to speak of those who lived in the Valley thousands of years back. Today we are thinking of complete freedom in all spheres of our life. We want to be free politically, socially, culturally, economically and spiritually. Nothing less will satisfy us. In times gone by such was not the case. Our forefathers had their own high ideals; in certain respects they excelled us but in certain others they were far behind the modern age. Some of our ideals were unthinkable for them because they were surrounded by environments in which such ideas could not be born in the minds of men.

How the struggle for freedom started in the Valley of Kashmir, what changes of fortune it saw through the ages and where it stands today is a fascinating story for any student of history.

Hindus have been adversely criticised by foreigners for neglecting to preserve a connected record of their past history. There is paucity of historical material relating to the Hindu period in almost all regions of India. Happily in the case of Kashmir a faithful record of her past has been preserved in the well-known book *Rajtarangini* (River of Kings) in Sanskrit

verse by the learned Brahmin Kalhana who lived in the twelfth century A.C. He is not the first historian of the Valley. Many others had preceded him to whom he is indebted for much of the material that he has used in writing *Rajtarangini.* "I have examined eleven works of former scholars which contain the chronicles of Kings, as well as the doctrine of the sage Nila (i.e. *Nilamatapurana*)", admits Kalhana. Reputed among his predecessors are Helaraja who flourished in the eighth century A.C., Ratnakara who lived in the reign of King Avanti Varman (855-900 A.C.) and Kshemendra of the time of King Kalsa (1063-89 A.C.). One of the ancient historians was Suvrata who condensed the older chronicles in order that their contents might be easily remembered. But, says Kalhana, "Suvrata's poem, though it has acquired fame, is not easily understood being difficult owing to pedantic show of learning". None of these ancient histories except the *Nilamatapurana* is extant.

Kalhana was the son of Lord Champaka who served as a minister of King Harsha (1089-1101 A. C.). Probably the historian himself also held some responsible post in the Government of Kashmir of his own time before he wrote *Rajtarangini.* He was a resident of Parihaspora (modern Paraspore) and a votary of Shaivism but not a believer in the Tantras. His admiration for Buddhism and tolerance for other cults were great.

Kalhana was scrupulous, responsible and careful in writing his chronicles. In his own words "that man of merit alone deserves praise whose language, like that of a judge, in recording the events of the past has discarded bias as well as prejudice". He did all one could to arrive at the veracity of statements and facts recorded by his predecessors. He consulted the early chronicles, biographies and charters, critically examined inscriptions of temples, other public buildings, memoirs of renowned personages, records of land grants, laudatory scrolls, coins, edicts issued at the coronation of former kings, and manuscripts of literary works, before he embarked upon the most difficult task of writing the saga of the Kings of Kashmir. But despite this stupendous labour and the unprecedented precautions he took

in writing *Rajtarangini*, it is unwise to rely on his chronology which is defective due to the errors of the early chroniclers. Kalhana himself appears to be conscious of this defect as he studiously refrains from giving any dates before the year 596 A.C. Till then his narrative is brief and vague. "Without doubt his materials become more plentiful, more detailed and thoroughly historical from the beginning of the Karkota or Naga dynasty which came into power in 596 A. C.", writes the learned R.S. Pandit, the painstaking translator of *Rajtarangini*.[1] The nearer Kalhana approaches his own times the more reliable become his chronicles in the matter of dates and in other respects. Kalhana was a keen observer and a fair-minded historian and looked at political, religious and social problems of the country with a critical, unbiased and objective eye. He has commented fearlessly on the opinions and doings of kings, nobles and common folk not only of ancient Kashmir but also of those living in his own times.

After Kalhana the writing of history was continued. In the time of Zain-ul-Abidin (1421-72 A.C.). Jonaraja and Srivara brought down the narrative to their own day in their respective works known as *Rajavali* and *Jaina-Rajtarangini*. The latter records events till 1486 A.C. At the command of Zain-ul-Abidin, Mulla Ahmed, a courtier, translated Kalhana's *Rajtarangini* into Persian calling it *Bahar-ul-Asmar*. The task was taken up again by Prajnabhat who wrote *Rajavalipataka* in 1512 A.C. and by Shuka whose work *Rajtarangini* was composed in 1596 A.C. With the last named ended the writing of Kashmir history in Sanskrit verse.[2] Among the historians who wrote in Persian distinguished ones are Haider Malik (1659 A.C.), Narain Koul (1710 A.C.), Mohammed Azam (1747 A.C.) and Birbal Kachru (1850 A.C.). The work has been finally completed by several modern writers notably Pirzada Hassan, Prakash Ram, Hargopal Koul, Mohammed Din Fouq, Ghulam Muhyi'd-Din Sufi and others.

[1] *River of Kings*, by R.S. Pandit, Page 597.

[2] The histories written in Sanskrit verse have been translated into English by Jogesh Chandra Dutt and published in three volumes under the title *Kings of Kashmira*.

FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN EARLY AGES

It was the common belief among antiquarians that there was no stone age in Kashmir. But recent archaeological finds have disproved it as various implements such as standing megaliths, prone monoliths, tomahawk and tumuli have been found at different places such as Pandrethan, Vendrahom, Rangyl, etc. after careful search. But the known history of the civilised man in Kashmir begins, according to Kalhana, from 2450 B.C. when Gonanda I[1] ascended the throne and laid the foundations of the monarchial system of Government in the Valley. In all twenty-one dynasties ruled Kashmir till 1339 A.C. when the Muslims finally captured power and a foreigner, Shah Mir, ascended the throne.

The history of Kashmir opens with an interesting episode. Gonanda I went to war with Krishna of the epic fame on the side of his relative, Jarasandha, King of Magadha. He laid a siege to Mathura but was killed. His son Damodara also suffered the same fate in another attack on Krishna at a *swayamvara* ceremony at Gandhara (now East Afghanistan and N.W.F.P.). Then the dowager queen Yoshovati was installed on the throne.

Very little information is given about the political, social or economic conditions of the people living in this remote and ancient period of Kashmir history. As a matter of fact nothing is known about thirty-five out of fifty-two kings of the earliest dynasties. Kalhana gave them up as lost because their history was not available to him. However one of these lost kings of the Pandu dynasty, Ramdeva by name, is said to have vanquished as many as five hundred kings and brought the whole of the Subcontinent of India from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea under his sway.

The Mauryan Emperor Asoka (274 B.C. to 237 B.C.) conquered Kashmir in the middle of the third century before Christ. Probably it was for the first time that the Valley came under foreign domination. But this enslavement did not prove an unmitigated evil because the Mauryan imperialism brought with

[1] There is no truth in the statement that Dayakaran, a raja of Jammu, was invited by quarrelling Brahmins to rule over Kashmir at the dawn of History. Some modern chroniclers have made a statement to this effect to please the present-day Dogra rulers, which is not a historic fact.

it Buddhism to Kashmir. The Vedic Brahminism had degenerated and become an instrument of reaction, cruelty and suppression. The ruling classes headed by a section of short-sighted Brahmins had become demoralised. A story is recorded that in the days of King Sundarasena, God became so annoyed with the evil deeds of the citizens of Sandimatnagar, the capital, that He warned Kattal, the only good man in it, in a dream, to leave the city early next morning. When he did so, Sandimatnagar was submerged along with the king and its inhabitants. The site of the city is now occupied by the Volur lake.

So when Buddhism came with its doctrines of love, piety, universal brotherhood, spiritual discipline, high morals, equality and liberty for all classes and both sexes, tbe Mauryan imperialism proved a blessing in disguise.

Emperor Asoka was tolerant in the matter of religious views. He allowed the people to practise their own religion and follow their own customs and traditions. But he also despatched Buddhist missionaries to preach the new creed. The first missionary to come to Kashmir was Majjhantika. Many Kashmiris readily accepted the Four Noble Truths and the Eight Rules of Right Conduct. Significantly enough Nagas, an intellectual class though belonging to lower strata of society, were the first to accept the new faith. Progressive Kshatriyas and enlightened Brahmins followed soon. The mass conversions produced revolutionary changes in the political, social and cultural life of Kashmir. The thinking of the community was stirred, the creative forces were released and the lower castes received encouragement and secured freedom which they had never experienced before. It is not known whether Asoka visited the Valley himself but there is a presumption that he did because it was he who for the first time laid the foundations of the present city of Srinagar at the site which is now known by the name of Pandrethan. He also built many viharas and stupas in the Valley. After the death of Asoka Kashmir appears to have regained her independence. He was succeeded by Jalauka whom Kalhana states to be the son of the former. But in Indian history there is no mention of a son of Asoka by

that name ; therefore Jalauka was probably a native king of the Valley. During the reign of Jalauka, Buddhism suffered a reverse in the beginning but later on he was converted to the new faith and built viharas for the bhikshus. Jalauka patronised learning and established Constitutional Government on firm foundations by introducing a Council of Ministers consisting of :

1. the Chief Justice
2. the Superintendent of Revenue
3. the Treasurer
4. the Chief of the Army
5. the Envoy
6. the Pontiff
7. the Astrologer

Jalauka also created eighteen departments of State to administer the country in an organised manner.

The Kushans came to power in India in the beginning of the Christian era. Having conquered the whole of Northern India including Gandhara, Kashgar, Yarqand and Khutan, they brought Kashmir too under their sway. Kanishka (78-123 A.C.) was the most powerful of the Kushans who embraced Buddhism. He was enamoured of Kashmir and not infrequently held his court in the Valley. The chief event of his reign recorded in Buddhist chronicles is a general assembly of the Sangha convened by him under the presidentship of Nagarjuna to settle the strife between the contending Buddhist sects. The meeting place was Kandalvan, a monastery near Shalimar. It was attended by five hundred monks and *arhats* who came from all parts of India and made an exhaustive examination of all authoritative Buddhist literature. The assembly compiled elaborate decisions including a work called *the Mahavibhasha.* The canons of the faith as formulated by the assembly were inscribed on copper plates and were deposited in stone boxes. Then they were put underground and a stupa was built by the Emperor's order over it, The place known to be near Srinagar has not been located so far. Though Vedic religion existed side by side, Buddhism was most popular in the valley during the Kushan period. Kalhana says that Bodhisattva Nagarjuna

was virtually the "sole supreme ruler of the land." To such an extent was politics dominated by religion. It was an era of peace and progress. The Buddhist kings were lovers of learning, art and architecture. They built thousands of viharas, stupas, monasteries and sacred cupolas. Kanishka was succeeded by his sons Havishka (123 A.C.) and Jushka (140 A.C.) who also built cities in their own names.

With the end of Kushan rule in 178 A. C. Buddhism received a set-back in Kashmir. For more than four hundred years the new faith had led the country in awakening the common people and arousing a spirit of defiance in them against obscurantism and social injustice. A dynamic society of free men had taken birth which was absorbed in making original contributions to philosophy, literature, arts, architecture and science. But the reactionaries were not altogether dead. With the rise of the Gonanda dynasty at the end of Kushan rule a reaction definitely set in against Buddhism and attempts were made to revive Brahminism. It must be remembered that by now Buddhism had become corrupt and the Mahayana cult had changed the complexion of the original doctrine to such an extent as to make it almost indistinguishable from Brahminism. That facilitated the task of the opponents who started a campaign to liquidate the libertarian creed of Gautama. But it appears that among the critics of Buddhism were not only reactionary Brahmins but also progressive intellectuals who were not prepared to surrender the social and spiritual liberties that Buddhism had ushered in the Valley. While the former wanted to put the hands of the clock of progress back and revive the social, political and religious conditions that prevailed in the country during the pre-Buddhist days, the progressives saw that not only was it impossible to deprive the people of those liberties in social, political, religious, and intellectual spheres which the Buddhist era had established but that any attempt to do so would prove disastrous. The progressives therefore applied themselves to the task of finding the enduring humanist elements in the philosophy of Buddhism as well as in the holy scriptures of the Brahmins so that with the fu-

sion of both a new dynamic creed may be evolved for the guidance of the people. That religious philosophy came to be known as Shaivism which we shall discuss at its proper place.

Some of the kings of the Gonanda dynasty under the reactionary Brahmins persecuted Buddhists. One of them, King Nara, the sixth in the line, is said "to have burnt down thousands of viharas". This was against the sacred traditions and laboriously built culture of the people. There ensued strife, civil war, and unrest. In such disturbed conditions, as misfortune would have it, an unscrupulous cruel barbarian appeared on the scene who worked havoc in the valley. He was Mihirgula, the Hun.

With the decline of the Gupta Empire in India the Huns consolidated their power in northern India. Tormana, the Hun king, appears to have been a sagacious ruler. But his son Mihirgula proved a fiend. He relentlessly slaughtered and persecuted his Buddhist subjects which aroused the kings of India to combine and attack him. The confederation headed by Baladitya and Yashodharman defeated the Hun army and Mihirgula was taken prisoner. The chivalrous victors, however, generously released him and allowed him to go into exile. To what other place would Mihirgula repair but Kashmir which has always been a refuge for the persecuted and sanctuary for the criminal. Possibly he had also heard of the anti-Buddhist activities which the Kashmir king countenanced that prompted him to go to the valley. But "Mihirgula's brutal character was not bettered by Baladitya's magnanimity," writes Havell. "He took shelter in Kashmir where the raja protected him and gave him and his retinue a small appanage for their maintenance. But at the first opportunity he made a treacherous attack upon his benefactor, seized the kingdom for himself and with the augmented strength which success always brings to tyrants of criminal propensities next invaded Gandhara".[1] There the royal family was exterminated, thousands of non-combatants were massacred, the magnificent Buddhist

[1] *Aryan Rule in India*, by E. B. Havell, Page 362.

viharas and monasteries were plundered by his hordes and laid in ruins.

One can imagine what must have been the lot of Buddhists and freedom loving people in Kashmir when the valley was overrun by barbarians during the time of Mihirgula. It is said that "people knew the approach of the Hun armies by the vultures and crows which flew ahead of them." Kashmiris called Mihirgula by the name of *Trikotiha* (slayer of three crores) and Kalhana says that he was "the terrible enemy of mankind (who) had no pity for children, no compassion for women, no respect for the aged".[1] Once while returning from an expedition an elephant slipped on the Pir Panjal range near Aliabad Sarai and the poor beast fell down the precipice. The dying animal gave a shriek which so pleased Mihirgula that he got all the hundred elephants in the camp pushed down the mountain one by one. The place is called Hastivanj and local people still point out the ridge where the savage king amused himself.

It is interesting to note that Mihirgula favoured a class of Brahmins and built temples to please them. "Evil minded as the tyrant was", says Kalhana, "he yet sought to win religious merit by building Shaiva shrines and endowing Brahmins with monasteries which the lowest of the twice-born (Brahmins), as vile as their protector, did not disdain to accept".[2] Who could these vile creatures among the Brahmins be excepting those who detested the revolution that had been brought about by Buddhism in the social, spiritual and intellectual life of Kashmir and who wanted to take the country back to the pre-Buddhist period.

Overpowered by the sense of his own innumerable misdeeds and the awareness of the opposition of the better mind of Kashmir Mihirgula committed suicide circa 530 A.C.

After Mihirgula the kings of the Gonanda dynasty were restored to the throne. But the bitter experiences at the hands of the cruel Hun awakened in the people of Kashmir an undying urge for freedom. Unbridled despotism and divine claims of the

[1] *Rajtarangini*, i, 293. [2] *Aryan Rule in India*, Page 269.

kings came under severe censure and rebuke of the people. A Council of Ministers was therefore established to keep a strict watch over the powers of the monarchs. A convention of revolutionary significance in the history of Kashmir people's struggle for freedom was laid down according to which the king could be disposed of or even line of accession altered when the interests of the state or its people demanded it. This was a remarkable step. Under influence of the progressive intellectuals, the Kashmiris proclaimed and actually asserted the sovereignty of the people. A theory of state parallel to that of the divine right of kings was born. Thus the last of the Gonanda dynasty, Yudhishthira I, was expelled from his kingdom for misconduct[1] and an outsider Pratapaditya was invited to occupy the throne and assume the rulership for the progress and prosperity of the people. This again brought Kashmir under foreign rule and the suzerainty of Vikramaditya of Ujjain.

The Vikramaditya dynasty ruled Kashmir for 192 years. Jayendra, the last of the dynasty, attempted to become a despot and though his Prime Minister Sandhimati resisted his arbitrary conduct the king continued his misdeeds. Ultimately Jayendra was dethroned by the will of the people and Sandhimati consented to the prayer of the citizens to rule the country.[2]

This change restored the Gonanda dynasty to the throne which remained in power till the last of the line Baladitya died issueless. The dynasty having become extinct, a prince Durlabhvardhan of the Karkota line was installed on the throne of Kashmir.

The centuries that followed the accession to throne of Sandhimati witnessed the golden period in the early ages of the Kashmir history. The conflict between Buddhism and Brahminism had been resolved by the most intelligent method of fusion of the two cultures which flowered in the Shaivite philosophy containing positive achievements of both. The acceptance of the new philosophy by the intellectuals as well as by the masses resulted in the rout of the reactionary Brahmins. It

[1] *River of Kings*, Page 41.

[2] *Rajtarangini*,, ii, 116.

was in this period that Kashmiris produced the noblest of literature in many branches of knowledge. They became famous all over Asia as the most cultured race and teachers of humanity. The learned Kashmiris travelled all over the Subcontinent, went to Tibet, China and abroad overseas preaching the gospel of Buddhism or the philosophy of the new creed Shaivism that they had founded at home. The architecture and sculpture of this period is magnificent and virile. Noble in design and glorious in execution it can favourably compare with architectural achievements of this age in any other civilised part of the world. And lastly it was in this period that the kings of Kashmir excelled as conquerors and proved that they were gifted with the ability to successfully command big armies and that Kashmiris were as brave at wielding arms as they were intelligent in evolving ideas. Hieun Tsiang, Chinese traveller, who visited the valley in 631-33 A.C. wrote : "Kashmiris loved learning and were well instructed".

It is beyond the scope of this book to describe in detail the events, however interesting they may be, of the various rules of the Gonanda (restored) and the Karkota or the Naga dynasties till Avantivarman ascended the throne in 857 A.C. But mention may be made of King Meghvahana, who ruled gloriously for 34 years. He was a staunch believer in non-violence and forbade slaughtering of birds and animals in his kingdom. He was such a zealot in the spread of his creed that he went on an expedition, conquered many countries, including the far distant Ceylon and inflicted the ideology of non-violence on the kings and the peoples of the conquered lands. Other notable monarchs were Praversena I who laid the foundations of the city of Srinagar at the present site and built the first bridge across Vitasta (Jhelum) ; Matri Gupta, the poet, who assumed rulership under curious conditions as protege of Vikramaditya of Ujjain ; Durlabhvardhan in whose time the renowned Chinese traveller Hieun Tsiang visited the valley and lived in it for two years ; Durlabhaka also called Pratapaditya who built Pratapapur (modern Tapar) with its magnificent edifices and temples, and Jayapida who founded Jayapur (modern Anderkot).

The most famous of all the kings of the period is Lalitaditya, also called Muktapida, who ruled Kashmir for 37 years from 695-732 A.C. The country having progressed and prospered by the benefit of more or less good administration for a long period, Lalitaditya raised a big army and trained and organised it for warfare outside Kashmir. He then led several expeditions to northern, eastern and central India subduing, among others, Yasovarman, king of Kanya Kubja (Kanauj) in 720 A.C. He received tribute from the eastern kings and wore the turban of victory in the Antarvedi or the region between the Ganga and the Jamuna. The land of Kanauj from the banks of the Jamuna to the banks of the Kalika came under his sway, as if it had been a yard attached to his house. A little later Lalitaditya seized all the elephants in the kingdom of Gaudas (Bengal). He went on conquering one kingdom after another of the southern peninsula including the "seven Konkans" and the regions to the west. Having brought Bharat Varsha under his sway, Lalitaditya turned his attention towards north-west and trans-Indian regions bordering on Kashmir. He conquered one after another Purushpura, Taxicila, and Gandhara. He proceeded further into Bukhara and Turkistan defeating small and big kings in the way and returned by the north subduing the rulers of Dardistan (modern Gilgit) and Baltistan. The countries lying adjacent to Kashmir such as Jammu, Kashtwat, (Kishtwar), Parnotsa (Poonch), and Rajapuri (Rajouri) were annexed by Lalitaditya to his kingdom but with others he was content to make them own him as their overlord. Lalitaditya was not only a great and good ruler, he was also a brilliant and generous victor. Generally he treated the vanquished rulers with kindness. Except when they were insubordinate or disloyal he never attempted to humiliate them.

Lalitaditya carried on the expeditions of conquest till the very end of his days. Indeed it is said that he disappeared on the Zojila pass while he was returning from one of these expeditions which he led towards Aryanaka (Persia). He remained absent from the country most of the time and it is remarkable that Kashmir was well governed according to the standard of

that time by the council of ministers as there was neither any discontent among the people nor any attempt at usurpation of the throne. Kalhana says that the king's Prime Minister, Shankuna, filled his treasury with gold with his magical powers. This shows that the country must have been prosperous enough to enable the Government to collect huge revenue for the State. But this prosperity was confined to the upper classes and the condition of the exploited masses did not differ in essential respects from serfdom. While the courtiers had "fried-meats" and "delightful light wine cooled with ice and perfumed with flowers" the food of the common people was, rice and *hakh* (Sanskrit *Shaka*).[1]

In one of his expeditions Lalitaditya met Bhavabhuti the famous poet of Vidharba. A lover of learning, the king brought him to his court.

Lalitaditya was not without blemishes in his character. He was a drunkard and would commit acts of folly and injustice when under the influence of liquor. It is related that in one such moment while living at Parihaspura, a city built by himself, he caused the king of Gaudas (Bengal) to be murdered in Trigami. Lalitaditya governed Kashmir adopting machiavellian principles. In a kind of instrument of instructions to his council of ministers, he is reported to have observed, that "those, who dwell there in the mountains difficult of access, should be punished even if they give no offence ; because, sheltered by these fastnesses, they are difficult to break up if they have accumulated wealth. Every care should be taken that people in the villages should not be left with more food supply than required for the year's consumption, or more oxen than wanted for the tillage of the fields, because, if they keep more wealth, they would become in a single year very formidable Damaras (feudal lords) and strong enough to neglect the commands of the kings".[2] Lalitaditya was of the view that cultivator's style of living must be lower than that of the city dweller, that offices should not he held by family cliques and

[1] *River of Kings,* Page XXVIII.

[2] *Rajtarangini,* IV, 246—48.

that troops should not be raised from a single district. Some of the views are doubtless anti-social, reactionary and unbecoming of the great monarch that Lalitaditya was. Possibly the prosperous conditions of the feudal lords frightened him ; possibly he needed more and more money for his military exploits. But, in any case, such views about the administration have to some extent neutralised the great achievements to the credit of the famous king.

Lalitaditya introduced certain constitutional reforms and created new offices of High Chamberlain, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Master of the Horses, Keeper of the Treasury and Chief Executive Officer in addition to the old ones. For the first time in the history of the valley, he executed drainage works on an extensive scale which brought large fertile tracts of land out of water for cultivation. Consequently food supply became abundant.

From Kushan times the people of Kashmir were closely associated with the people of Gandhara and other lands in the north. It appears that Lalitaditya and his predecessors had family connections with the Hindu Turks of this region. His Prime Minister, Shankuna, and some other high placed officials belonged to these countries.

Lalitaditya was a great builder. Wherever he went he built towns and cities, and erected temples in them dedicated to different deities. At the successful completion of each expedition he would either lay the foundation of a new town or get a temple constructed. He was a Shaivite by faith but evinced equal regard for Buddhism. "He is the most conspicuous figure in the history of Kashmir", writes Sufi "He raised his country to a pitch of glory it had never reached before. The ruins of the temple at Martanda about five miles from Anantnag or Islamabad, and of his city, Parihaspura, fourteen miles from Srinagar, bear eloquent testimony to his greatness".[1]

The great nation remembered Lalitaditya for many centuries after his death. Alberuni, the famous Muslim traveller who accompanied Mahmud Gaznavi in the eleventh century, re-

[1] *Kashir,* Volume I, Page 52.

cords that the Kashmiris of his time celebrated annually a certain day as festival in commemoration of Lalitaditya's victories.

Lalitaditya's successors proved to be selfish, greedy and incapable men. They were puppets in the hands of the feudal lords who were all the time quarrelling with each other. Within half a century, one by one all these countries which had been annexed by the great conqueror, declared their independence. That would not be regrettable. But the misfortune was that inside Kashmir there was disorder due to maladministration and misgovernment. Fortunately at such a juncture another great king in the history of Kashmir ascended the throne in 855 A. C. He was Avantivarman who should be considered noblest of all the rulers because his greatest ambition was to raise the people culturally and socially and he did not aspire to be a conqueror at the cost of the progress of his own homeland.

In Avantivarman's time, the valley was inundated and water-logged so that very small area of land was available for cultivation. Floods and famines had become annual visitations and people were dying by hundreds for want of food. Wisely did Avantivarman devote his sole attention to the economic condition of the people. Fortunately the king secured the services of a genius in Engineering named Suyya. The parentage of this great man is unknown. Probably he was an illegitimate child of some unfortunate woman as he was found in a new earthen pot with a lid in a dust heap on the street by a Chandala (outcaste) woman who adopted him. Suyya's deep and wide knowledge of irrigation engineering enabled him to rightly attribute the cause of flood to the silt which had accumulated at the bed of Vitasta below Baramulla where the river leaves the valley and enters the rocks. He therefore got the silt cleared and also drained a large part of the Vitasta. He raised solid stone embankments on either side of the river, wherever needed. Having successfully completed this work of primary importance, Suyya next devoted his energies to framing other irrigation projects for the welfare of the people. He

diverted the rivers and "after examining various kinds of soil, he supplied the villages with water of viaducts from the river removing their dependence solely on rain."[1] Thus a vast area of culturable land was reclaimed and the people got plenty of food to eat. Within a decade he changed the face of the valley from a miserable-looking and poverty-stricken country to a prosperous land. Kalhana says that the paddy which was sold for 1050 dinnars a *khari* (khirwar or about two maunds) previously became available at 36 dinnars a *khari* after Suyya had executed his marvellous schemes of engineering. Even during times of great abundance the purchase price of a *khari* of paddy had been two hundred dinnars in the valley.

Suyya's services to Kashmir have never been properly and fittingly evaluated. He was one of the truly great personalities of the times of whom Kashmiris can rightly feel proud. He was of doubtful birth, an adopted son of a poor outcaste girl. All haughty, high-brow men and powerful exploiters in the society were bent upon opposing and foiling him. It is not surprising that when he presented his plan to Avantivarman the courtiers with one voice derisively commented upon it. He was considered crazy. Reactionary Brahmins particularly were determined to destroy him. They could not brook to see a low-caste man doing work that only a genius could accomplish. But Suyya firmly stood his ground and through sheer perseverence ultimately won. Even after he had achieved success his opponents presented his schemes in a clumsy and grotesque manner. They said that the Engineer took boat-loads of money to places on Vitasta and dropped heaps of coins into the river[2] so that famished and stricken people in their attempts to find the sunken wealth would desilt the river. It was nothing of the sort. Suyya's plans were based on sound principles of Engineering and he proved to be the master craftsman to carry them out. Doubtless he spent huge sums on drainage which proved to be a wise investment in the long run. His opponents declared it to be waste like throwing money into water. It must however be

[1] *Rajtarangini* V, 109.
[2] Ibid V, 116-117.

acknowledged that Avantivarman possessed the fair sense of recognising merit wherever he found it. That helped Suyya and enabled him to perform his wonderful feats.

In recognition of his services to the State a town was founded in the name of the Great Engineer. It is called Suyya-pur (modern Sopore).

When the economic condition of the people was improved and order restored in the country, Avantivarman bestowed his attention upon the revival of Art and Architecture. He founded the town of Avantipura and built two temples near it. He attracted men of learning to his court. Eminent among them were Shivaswamin, Ratnakara, Anandvardhan and Kallata Bhat.

With the death of Avantivarman in 884 A.C. a long dark age started in Kashmir. History of almost all those who succeeded to the rulership of the country till finally the Hindu monarchs became extinct, is a black record of shameful deeds hardly ever relieved by any silver line of meritorious action.

There is nothing notable to mention during this period except that a powerful, ambitious but unscrupulous queen Didda, daughter of the Shahi dynasty of Gandhara, ruled the country from 980-1003 A.C. As a matter of fact she was at the helm of political affairs for nearly half a century. She was the power behind the throne when from 950-58 A.C. her husband Kshemgupta ruled. She became Regent from 958-72 while her minor son Abhimanyu was nominally on the throne. She ultimately became the ruler in 980 A.C. in her own right after she got her two minor grandsons Nandigupta (972-73 A.C.) and Tribhuvana (973-975 A.C.) secretly assassinated one after the other and a third one Bhimgupta (975-980 A.C.) imprisoned for flouting her authority. Didda was a strong-willed person who put down all opposition to her with ruthlessness.

In 1015 A.C. Mahmud Gaznavi invaded Kashmir. The Kashmiri troops faced the invader at Lohara near Rajouri. The mighty conqueror was resisted and repulsed. Owing to inclement weather, Mahmud had to return without fulfilling the ambition of conquering the valley. This was the only expedi-

tion of the Emperor, which proved unsuccessful. It was in the reign of Sangramraja (1003-1023 A.C.) that Anandpal, after his defeat at the hands of Mahmud, sought shelter in the valley.

Here end the early ages in Kashmir and we will now enter into the medieval times. We have described the ups and downs in the political life of our people from earliest times. It is meet that we should know something about their cultural achievements for no history of a freedom movement can be complete without a knowledge of its cultural side.

CHAPTER TWO

CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF ANCIENTS

IT is no easy task to state correctly the social and economic conditions of the people of Kashmir during the earlier ages. The available historical material on the subject is very meagre. It is obvious that the lives led by Hindu Kings were, generally speaking, simple. Their wants were few and their own economic and social lives were not far removed from those of ordinary men. Hieun Tsiang, the Chinese traveller who visited Kashmir during the reign of Durlabh Vardhan (617-53 A.C.) found the people prosperous and peaceful though at the same time he called them "light and frivolous and of a weak and pusillanimous disposition."

It is remarkable that in the discharge of public duties the Kashmir queens have distinguished themselves as well as the kings. Seclusion or veiling of women was unknown even among the upper classes and royalty in ancient Kashmir. The queens as well as the kings were sprinkled with the sacred waters of the coronation. The queens had their own councillors and treasurers. They took active part in the governance of the country side by side with the kings. Some of them ruled independently and with firmness. Mention has already been made of Rani Yashovati who came to the throne at the dawn of history. About her Kalhana observes that "the eyes of men which viewed womankind with scant courtesy as the objects of their pleasure, looked upon this mother of her subjects as if she were a goddess".

Queen Sugandha ruled Kashmir just at the beginning of the tenth century. A notable queen was Suryamati who made the rule of her husband Ananta (1028-63 A.C.) a success when the rebellion of the feudal lords had all but deposed him. Finding Ananta weak to govern and realising that the country

needed a strong administration she forced him to abdicate in favour of his son Kalsha. Of queen Didda who, like Razia Begum, scandalised her courtiers through her illegitimate intimacy with a Gujjar named Tunga but unlike the latter survived the deed, we have already taken note. Kalhana's *Rajtarangini* mentions scores of women, including queens, who played by no means insignificant roles in the politics of Kashmir. We find that in early times in Kashmir "women had emerged from the domestic into the political stage, were free, owned immovable property, managed their own estates and even fought at the head of their troops". In describing the women of Kashmir, their beauty and accomplishments, the poet Bilhana tells us that they spoke Sanskrit fluently.

As an achievement of the continued struggle for freedom during the Buddhist and Hindu periods, kings had been divested of much of their autocratic power. The traditional authority of the Supreme Council of the State consisting of ministers and feudal lords was recognised. It was under this authority that dozens of monarchs who had proved unfit to rule were deposed and replaced by candidates with the needed qualifications and merit. Even during peaceful times it was this Council of State which decided the succession to kingship in a disputed case. When the Gonanda dynasty became extinct it was through the election by the ministerial council, as representing the voice of the people, that a prince of the Karkota line was consecrated with sacred water poured out from golden jars.[1] In the disturbed and unsettled times of the tenth century Kashmir, a notable incident has been recorded by Kalhana which occurred in or about 939 A.D. when Commander-in-Chief Kamala Vardhan was in a position to seize the throne for himself by armed might. He hesitated and was anxious to win public opinion to his side. He called the progressive Brahmins, the representatives of the intellectual class, together and convassed them in his desire for election to the throne. "Make a countryman of yours, strong and full-grown king", he beseeched.

[1] *Rajtarangini*, ii, 528.

"To the historian the interest lies, firstly, in the fact that in spite of the corruption and violence of the times, an appeal was made to the traditional law of kingship instead of to the force of arms", observes E.B. Havell, "and secondly, in the unexpected result of the Assembly's vote, which was that Kamala Vardhan's claims were set aside in favour of a Brahmin candidate, Yashaskara who was duly consecrated as king by the ancient vedic rite of abhisheka and reigned for forty-seven years afterwards".[1]

It is true that public opinion in the modern sense did not exist in ancient Kashmir but doubtless feudal lords, wealthy nobles, intellectual classes, groups of artisans and Brahmins in general were exerting tremendous influence on the administration as well as on the conduct of the ruler. As soon as a king became unpopular in the eyes of the people and if he could not be deposed constitutionally or by ordinary peaceful methods, risings and rebellions were organised and the king made to feel the force of adverse public opinion. Deposition of kings by the people is as well known to Kashmir history as usurpation of the throne by court intrigues or by *coup d' etat*. Many sections of masses took prominent part in such risings. They were led by Damaras (Feudal Lords), Nyayakas (Village Headmen) and similar wealthy or politically conscious classes. There were other factions like Tantrins (the Praetorians) and the Ekangas (the Gendarmes) who supported the royal authority and guarded the palace and the king's person. There can be no doubt that the fear of these risings produced a healthy and wholesome check on the conduct of the kings. As in every other country during early times, the Church and the State worked hand in hand in Kashmir. But it is interesting to note that in case of difference the Brahmin leaders of the church resorted to hunger strike and passive resistance to get their grievances redressed. Kashmiris in early ages were freedom-lovers and intensely patriotic. But their patriotism was not aggressive, nor did they become unjust in their love

[1] *Aryan Rule in India*, Page 275.

for their national heroes and great men. My country right or wrong was none of their mottoes. Mention has been made of the assassination of the king of Gaudas at Trigami under command of Lalitaditya. The followers of the murdered king travelled all the way from their homeland to Kashmir to avenge the death of their master. On reaching Srinagar they attacked a temple and rooted out the god Ranaswami and broke it to pieces because it was the most favourite god of Lalitaditya. Kalhana justifying the action of the Gaudians, observes, as a believer in human justice, that "the world is filled with the renown of the heroes of the Gaudian country who sacked it (Ranaswami) in revenge of their master's death."[1]

The economic life of the people must have been very simple. The only source of production was land. There were no big industries and no extensive arts and crafts. Cultivators had to pay one-tenth of the produce of their land to the State. But the condition of the common people as disclosed in the *Rajtarangini* was not a happy one. Owing to the eternal strife between the kings and the feudal barons on the one hand and by the tyranny of the bureaucrats on the other the people were crushed. Fiscal extortion was another demon which destroyed them. It is however notable that neither birth nor caste was a bar to the holding of any civil or military office. The Brahmin and the Domb (a low caste) alike could be soldiers as well as Rajputras, the professional warriors. Some of the best and bravest generals and expert swordsmen have been Brahmins who have also ruled the country from time to time. King Chakravarman (923-933 A.C.) married an untouchable Domba woman and made her the premier queen. She entered the famous sacred temple of Vishnu near Srinagar to which, followed by the feudatory nobles, she paid a visit in state. Her relatives held high posts and, says Kalhana, "orders issuing forth from the mouth of the Dombas became like royal commands difficult to transgress and were not transgressed by anyone".

Though the ancient Hindu society was caste-ridden and

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[1] *Rajtarangini*, V, 325-30.

inequality was the pivot on which it stood it is remarkable that slavery did not form any of its part. The common people in Kashmir were doubtless living lives not far removed from serfdom but they were not slaves. Kalhana has expressed his horror of the slave trade of the Malechhas (Barbarians) and in doing so he was reflecting the public view of his own age.

The Damaras (modern Dars) were the most influential feudal lords with whom the kings and members of the royal family formed matrimonial alliances. But the Damara was not a hereditary rank monopolised by a selected few. The status of a Damara was one to which a member of any caste could raise himself through labour after acquiring wealth and influence.

From immemorial times Kashmir has been, for two reasons, a great seat of learning and art. First, the valley is geographically situated on the map where the borders of as many as six countries meet. It was through Kashmir that the travellers and traders from and to all these lands passed bringing with them, besides merchandise, the ideas and arts that flourished in those lands. Secondly, the salubrious climate and the enchanting scenic beauties of the valley attracted thinkers, scholars, artists, architects and builders from many parts of Asia to visit the fairy land. Some of them would not leave the valley after they had once seen it, so enthralled they were. Like Nagarjuna they made Kashmir their adopted homeland. Naturally the most lovely surroundings accelerated their powerful faculties for creative work and they made glorious contributions to the already existing vast store house of knowledge in the valley. Thus it was that the Kashmir culture was continuously enriched and it reached new heights as centuries passed by.

There was scarcely any branch of learning which the people of Kashmir had not studied and to which they did not make their own original contributions. In philosophy, religion, medicine, astronomy, literature, engineering, sculpture, architecture, painting, music, dancing and in many other walks of life the progress of Kashmiris during the early ages was striking and when compared with our present pitiable condition simply mar-

vellous. It is not within the scope of this book to discuss in detail all the achievements of our forefathers but as a part of the Freedom Movement notice has to be taken in passing of some of their outstanding cultural accomplishments.

Ancient Kashmiris were Naga (snake) worshippers and followed the religion of the Vedas to a large extent. But other creeds of the antiquity such as Zorastrianism, Confuscianism and the religion of the Jews were not unknown to them. When Buddhism was imported into the valley during the rule of Asoka, they cheerfully adopted it. The doctrine of Lord Buddha remained a popular religion in the valley for several centuries. Its decline and final disappearance from Kashmir as from India as a separate religious cult were the result of a process of gradual intellectual absorption. Learned Kashmiris served as missionaries of Buddhism and carried the teachings of Gautama to China and many other distant lands. The priest Kumarajiva who studied the Vedas and the Hinayana Buddhist doctrine in Kashmir was honoured by the title of Tungsheo (one though young in years is ripe in wisdom) by a monarch of the Ching dynasty (284-417 A.C.) for the services which he rendered to the cause of learning. Another savant was Prince Gunavardhan of Kashmir who settled in China and painted Jataka stories at Canton. Kashmir Buddhists also carried the torch of the Faith to Tibet and as distant a country as Yadavdwip (Sumatra). Prince Gunavardhan before going to China landed at this island. Here he converted the ruling queen to Buddhism who in her turn converted her family and thousands of her subjects to the Faith. The people of Khotan ascribed their conversion to a Bodhisattva called Vairocana who had come from Kashmir.

But the greatest contribution to the evolution of Buddhism, that changed its entire complexion and made it a popular religion of the masses, was made by Nagarjuna, who flourished in the first century B.C. By birth this great thinker belonged to Berar, but early in his age he made Kashmir his home and settled at Sadarhadvana (modern Harwan), a village 12 miles distant from Srinagar. "Nagarjuna was the Luther of Buddhism, the apostle of bhakti-marga, who would find means of expression

for the deep-seated religious instincts of the masses through the way of devotion to the Divine Teacher, rather than through the dry agnostic philosophy of the Hinayana Schools", writes Havell.[1] Nagarjuna is the author of the radical school of the Mahayanist Buddhism which is called the Madhyamika, the Middle Way. It no doubt made Buddhism a popular creed over the greater part of Asia but in the land of its birth the Faith lost that revolutionary fervour which characterised it during the first few centuries after the death of Lord Buddha. The Mahayana opened the path for Brahminism to absorb the heretic creed and make it as one among so many castes of Hinduism. But these vicissitudes in the fate of the Sangha have not affected the greatness of Nagarjuna in the Buddhist pantheon. He has been raised to the exalted position of Bodhisattva and enjoys the reputation of being the greatest thinker of the age. The powerful critical philosophy of Nagarjuna has been revived by Japanese commentators of the modern times. Kalhana tells us that the dialectics of Nagarjuna's critical philosophy destroyed the primitive beliefs of the people of Kashmir as it cut at the roots of the religious rites prescribed in the *Nilamatpurana.*

Equally remarkable if not more important than the establishment of the Madhyamika School, is the evolution of a new religious philosophy by the Kashmiri philosophers during the centuries following the one when Nagarjuna flourished. It is the glorious outcome of the fusion of the ancient Vedic and the Buddhist cultures. This indigenous system of philosophy is markedly different from other known systems of philosophies in India. It is called Kashmir *Shaivism* (as distinct from the Shaivism of south India) or the *Trika Shastra* (the three fold science) or simple *Trika* (the triple). As the name implies this philosophy pertains to the three vital matters of greatest importance namely (a) man (b) his universe and (c) the fundamental principle which keeps on restoring order, equilibrium and harmony in the universe where it is disturbed and disrupted by constant change. Though dealing with all the three in larger or lesser degrees the *Trika* is particularly interested in

[1] *Aryan Rule in India,* Page 141.

man and his personality. Shaivism considers *Swatantrya*(complete freedom) as the one and the final goal of human life. This goal it calls the Ultimate Reality beyond which nothing exists. Shiva, the Lord,is another name for independence. The only reality of the universe is Shiva who is infinite consciousness and unrestricted independence. He has many other features like omnipresence, eternality and formlessness though independence is peculiar to him. "Our bondage is due to ignorance", say the *Shiv Sutras.* "Though the soul is infinite consciousness man thinks 'I am finite', though independent he thinks 'I am the finite body' ", observes Kshemendra in his comments on the *Shiv Sutras.* "The soul forgets that the world has existence only in Shiva and that the soul is identical with the Lord".

The *Trika* describes consciousness of man as the Atman, the nuclear core, which is the enternal and one witness of all that is undergoing ceaseless change namely the body, mind, and spirit composed of thoughts, feelings and emotions which are subject to growth and decay. In this philosophy the word for change is "speeding". The aim of the *Trika Shastra* is to awaken man to the fact that this Atman, the Witness, is no other than the Shiva, the All powerful Lord of the Universe. A second to Shiva there is none.

Of the Indian philosophies it is the Sankhya system of Kapila which has analysed man's personality in detail and discovered twenty-five elements composing it. The *Trika* has gone deeper and found no less than thirty-six principles. It has laid open new layers of consciousness and regions of the sub-conscious states. And the system does not rest with mere delineation of the principles. In addition to the detailed analysis of man's physical, psychic, psychological, spiritual and mental personality the *Trika* teaches the exact method of knowing these constituent parts by direct experience, that is by realizing them as facts and not mere figments of imagination.

The *Trika Shastra* is the synthesis of the essential things that are to be found in almost all the Indian philosophies plus the knowledge gained by the Kashmiri thinkers with their own observations and experience. It is an intelligent synthesis of

all that is abiding, universal and enduring in the Vedanta, the Sankhya, the Vaisheshika, the Nyaya and the Vinaya of Buddha; it also contains the core of Vaishnava and Shakta teachings, especially the gospel of supreme love and all absorbing devotion for the beloved. "Shiva is the subject as well as the object, the experiences as well as the experienced".[1]

In Shaivism beauty is another name for morally good and the power responsible for creation is the Most Beautiful. Love, Truth and Beauty are the different names of one and the same thing.

The *Trika* philosophy is characterised by absolute monism, depth of thought and originality. Essentially it is an idealist philosophy unrelenting in its analysis and logic; but it does not shirk realism, the objective reality of the world.

According to Shaiva philosophy, Soul is of the same nature as consciousness; there is no difference between the individual soul and the universal soul. Therefore the doctrine of the plurality of souls is denied in the *Trika Shastra.* While synthesising the previous systems of Indian philosophy the Kashmiri thinkers sedulously avoided to include barren parts represented by negativism, escapism and unemotionalism of the Upanishadic Vedanta. In Shaivism there is no Maya, the principle which creates illusory forms. Even the existence of a promoting cause, *Karma*, or a material cause *Prakriti* is not admitted. Shiva is absolutely independent and creates all that exists under the influence of desire by the mere force of His will. He makes the world appear in Himself as if it were distinct from Himself though it is not so really; even as objects appear in a mirror, God is as unaffected by the objects of His creation as the mirror is by the images reflected in it.[2] In *Trika* Shiva is represented as the symbol of the external process of destruction and creation. Shiva is Bhairava (Terrible) and also Kala (Time Destroyer). He is at the same time instinct, love. The Shaivism has no use for self-mortification as a way to Realization.

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[1] *Spanda Karika*, Page 5.

[2] *Indian Philosophy* by Dr Radhakrishnan, Vol. II, Page 732.

The *Trika* literature is divided into three parts namely (a) the Agama Shastra, that is the science which has come down from remote antiquity. The origin of the books of this class is unknown ; they are believed to have been the discourses between Shiva and Shakti, (b) the Spanda Shastra, the science of the universe as ever changing or "speeding" phenomena and (c) the Pratyabhijna Shastra, the science of Recognition. The last is also often called the Ishvara Pratyabhijna Shastra that is the Science of the Recognition of Lord (Shiva).

The system of Shaivism was first founded by Vasugupta in the eighth century A. C. and the first book on the subject which has come down to us is *Shiva Sutra Vimarshini*, an Agama Shastra. The legend has it that, as revealed to him in a dream, Vasugupta found the Sutras inscribed on a rock called Shankar Pal. He copied them without delay and taught them to his disciples. This rock has been located but the inscription is no more traceable. Vasugupta himself wrote *Spanda Karika*, an important book on the subject. After him followed many other thinkers of eminence who either made original contributions to the *Trika* philosophy or wrote commentaries on Agama Shastras or the works of their predecessors.

Vasugupta's disciple Kalatta Bhat composed *Spanda Vritti* in the ninth century. Soon after came Somananda, a great genius, the founder of Pratyabhijna School, with his dazzling treatise the *Shivadrashti*. Utpaladeva whose books *Pratyabhijna* and *Stotravali* are given a place of authority on the subject lived in the tenth century. The most prolific, profound and versatile thinker on Shaivism is Abhinavagupta who was born between 950 and 960 A.C. He was a literary critic and the greatest exponent of the Shaiva philosophy and has written a number of books including commentaries and many original works. His monumental production the famous *Tantraloka* is rightly called the encyclopaedia of the monistic idealism of Kashmir. It comprises 5,800 stanzas and is divided into 37 chapters. For those who could not "enter into" the widely extensive Tantra loka, Abhinavagupta composed *Tantra Sara* which, as he says, is "composed of easy words". Another book by him

is *Parmartha Sara*, an admirable and beautiful synthesis of Sankhya and Vedanta systems of philosophy. Besides being a philosopher Abhinavagupta was a voluminous writer on several other subjects—Dramaturgy, Rhetoric and Philosophy of Poetry. Abhinavagupta had thousands of followers among the intellectuals in the valley and there is a tradition that he, along with twelve hundred of his disciples, walked into the Bhairava cave near Magam and was never seen again.

Other important writers on Shaivism were Kshemendra, Kshemraja, Jayaratha and Yogaraja.

In connection with Shaivism two points are of great interest to us living in the modern age of democracy and freedom. They throw much light on the culture of Kashmir of the centuries when the *Trika* philosophy was born and flourished. First, it is remarkable that almost all the Shaiva philosophers have laid emphasis on the fact that the *Trika* in both of its aspects, as a system of philosophy as well as an applied science, is meant for all human beings without any distinction of sex, creed, caste or colour. No one is to be deprived of the knowledge of Truth or the practice of realising the Ultimate Reality, the Complete Freedom. Indeed Abhinavagupta has clearly laid it down that "a man must have a woman as messenger" for communion with the all Powerful "who must be treated as one's equal and with honour"; otherwise he has no right to take part in any religious rites or rituals. Further "a woman devoted to the principles of the *Trika* will succeed in achieving the same *siddhi* in twelve days" as will take men, if they have the least fear in their hearts, twelve long months."[1] The second notable point in the *Trika* philosophy is that it clearly forbids suppression of any thought however strongly in opposition to Shaivism. The *Swachhand Tantra* of Kshemendra directs that "no genuine follower of *Trika* should have any quarrel with another system of thought and worship".

It was only recently that the store-house of the philosophical literature of Shaivism came to the notice of the outside world by the efforts of the State Research Department. It is

[1] *Tantraloka*-I, 13.

now attracting the attention of many eminent thinkers and scholars some of whom consider it more synthetic and profound than all the other known works on religious philosophies of the world. In the words of Rabindra Nath Tagore the *Trika* "has penetrated into that living depth of thought where diverse currents of human wisdom unite in a luminous synthesis."

The intellectual labour of the Kashmiri thinkers of the early ages was not confined to the spheres of philosophy and religion. They wrote on many other subjects. Works on literature are numberless. Among the important ones mention may be made of Bhim Bhatta's *Ravanarjuniya* (700 A.C.) Domodra Gupta's *Kuttni Mata* (760 A.C.) Kshiraswami's *Lexicon* (800 A.C.) Ratnakar's *Harivijaya* (850 A.C.) Sri Swami's *Kapphanabhyudaya* (850 A.C.) Valabhı Deva's commentaries on Kalidas's works (900 A.C.) Soma Deva's *Kathasaritsagara* (1000 A.C.), Mankha's *Sri Kanth Charita* (1160 A.C.) and Jayadratha's *Hari Charita Chintamani* (1200 A.C.).

Kshemendra who lived in the period 990-1065 A.C. was a versatile genius. He was of wealthy parentage, well educated and had travelled extensively in India. Though born in a Shaiva family he studied Vaishnavaism and was drawn towards it. He also esteemed Buddhism very highly.

Kshemendra was a lover of the stage and a frequent playgoer. His studies were wide and extended to Law, Grammar, Ayurveda, Politics, Music and Painting. He also knew carpentry and smithy. He was the tutor to the heir-apparent Kalasa. No less than thirty-four books written by him are extant. Among them is *Desopadesa* which delineates vividly the moral and political evils rampant in his own days. It gives a glimpse into the history of Kashmir of his times. Kshemendra is bitterly satirical of the government officials. His style is that of Voltaire and his book *Narmamala* is a remarkable work in this style. Another of his books *Darpadalana* (Pride has fall) is also well known. Kshemendra was the first person to render into Sanskrit the monumental work of Gunadhya, the *Brahat Katha* or Great Story, which was composed in the first century of the Christian Era in *Pishacha* dialect

(ancient Pushto) and consisted of 1,00,000 slokas. One of Kshemendra's beautiful and lucid poems is *Samayamatrika* which describes the progress of a courtesan throughout Kashmir. The poem is strikingly original in conception.

Another great poet was Bilhana who was born in 1078 A.C. at Khunamuh near Srinagar. He is a romantic figure. Finding no scope for his talents in Kashmir he went down to the plains at the early age of 16. He travelled through the whole of northern and central India gathering fame for his intellectual attainments. At Kalyani in the Deccan he was asked by the raja to teach the princess. Soon the teacher and the pupil fell in love with each other. With the raja's permission they married. Bilhana's love for his homeland however brought him back to Khunamuh where he died at the venerable age of 80 years. Among his works that have survived are (1) *Vikramankdev Charita (2) Karnasundari Mala (3) Chaurpanchashika.* The first named begins with the origin of Chalukya dynasty of the south and praises the king who ruled at the time. It contains eight cantoes and in the last Bilhana gives a history of his own family and a short account of the kings of Kashmir. Bilhana's poetry is lucid . simple and charming but he is no good at history. He has given a graphic and beautiful picture of the Srinagar of his own days. Bilhana repeatedly asserts that saffron is the inspirer of poetry and as this plant does not grow anywhere outside Kashmir therefore true poetry cannot be produced anywhere else but in the valley of Kashmir.

The great Patanjali was, according to some scholars, born in Kashmir before the dawn of the Christian era. Besides him other grammarians have flourished in the valley, notable among whom are Chandra in the second century, A.C., Kshiraswami and Vamana in the reign of Jayapida (774-808 A.C.) and Kayyata (950 A.C.) who wrote the *Laghuvritti.*

Many books have been written by distinguished authors on Alankar Shastra (Poetics). Out of the sixteen most famous rhetorians of ancient India Kashmir has produced no less than fourteen. Outstanding among them were (1) Vamana Bhatta who wrote *Kavyalankara* in 750 A.C. and was the founder of

the Riti School, (2) Udbhata (774-813 A.C.) the teacher of the theory of three *vrittis*, (3) Rudratha who composed *Srinagartilaka* in 825 A.C., (4) Abhinava Gupta the great expounder of the theory of *Rasadhvani*, (5) Ruyyaka (1125 A.C.) who wrote *Alankara Sarvasva* and (6) Mammata (1150 A.C.) who upheld the Rasa theory in his inimitable work *Kavyaprakasa*. Eighty-seven commentaries of which 25 are available, are known to have been written on the last named book. Mammata occupies a very high position in the literary firmament of Kashmir in the beginning of twelfth century. He belonged to the village Galandar. He had two brothers Jaiyata and Uvvata and all the three were noted literateurs.

Kalhana mentions Ashvaghosha, the celebrated author of *Buddhacharita*, as a resident of Kashmir. It is said that Kanishka acquired him as part of war indemnity and after profusely honouring him provided him with a suitable residence in the valley to peacefully carry on his literary pursuits. Ashvaghosha was a poet, musician, scholar, religious controversialist and a zealous Buddhist preacher.

Some research scholars believe that Kalidasa was a native of Kashmir because of his various references to scenes and events in his dramas and poems which could have occurred nowhere else but in Kashmir.

Two famous writers on medical science who flourished during the Hindu period were Charaka and Narhari. There was a controversy about the birth-place of the former but the discovery of some Buddhistic literature in China has set the doubts at rest. It has proved that Charaka flourished in the rule of Kanishka in first century A.C. and was a native of Kashmir. His book *Charaka Sanhita* contains eight chapters and deals not only with the diagnosis, prognosis, therapy and anatomy but with remedies and diet as well. It also gives elaborate instructions for guidance of doctors and students of medicine besides dealing with the main diseases found among human beings.

Nagarjuna, the founder of Mahayana Buddhism, was a chemist of great repute. He was one of the first propounders of the *Rasayan* and made use of Chemistry in the ameliora-

tion of human suffering. He possessed great medical and pharmaceutical acumen and had wide knowledge of drugs and medicines. He recast whole of the *Sushruta Samhita* and added the last portion known as Uttar Tantra to it. He was well practised in the art of compounding medicines and prepared pills by taking which one could prolong his life for many years so that neither the mind nor appearance decayed. Besides himself, one king, Satvahraja, is said to have partaken of this mysterious medicine.

The authorship of the famous treatise *Rasaratnakara* which is in the form of a dialogue is attributed to Nagarjuna. "Nagarjuna's outstanding contributions to India's chemical knowledge", says G.P. Srivastva of the Department of Pharmaceutics of the Banaras Hindu University, "rightly entitle him to be styled as the father of Indian Chemistry.........That he was one of the earliest Indian alchemists and that the credit of having invented the process of distillation, sublimation, calcination, colouring and alloying of metals, extraction of copper from pyrites and use of metal oxides in medicine etc., is only due to venerable Nagarjuna, is admitted on all hands. He is also accredited with having introduced *kajalli* or the black sulphite of mercury into medicinal use."[1]

Nagarjuna had profound faith in the efficacy of the Science of Chemistry. He has said: "As long as the Science of Chemistry prevails let not pain and pestilence torment men."

Astrology has been a special study of Kashmir Brahmins. The works of Bhaskaracharya, Aryabhatta and Ratnakantha are quoted as authorities by all those who follow the Indian system of Astronomy.

Admirers of Freud and those who believe sex impulse to be the main driving force in the behavior of human beings and dangerous to be ignored or suppressed will be interested to learn that Kashmiri writers applied their mind to this problem from very early times. Several books have been written on the subject. Mention may be made of two of them : one was written by Vasunanda in the fourteenth century and is called *Kama Shas-*

[1] *Morvi Miscellany*, Vol. III, Pp. 3-7.

tra ; the other is the well known book *Kok Shastra* also called *Ratirahasya* by Premier Koka Pandit. The latter gives a scientific and elaborate description of sex in its biological and psychological phases.

All the above mentioned works of Kashmiri authors on any subject are written in Sanskrit verse, the script being *Sharda* (and not *Devanagri*), an invention of their own.

Ancient Kashmir is distinguished for its architectural and artistic attainments no less than for its contribution to philosophy, religion and literature. The valley abounds in impressive ruins of what must have at one time been grand edifices. Vandalism has helped the destructive hand of Nature in demolishing most of the architectural accomplishments of early ages but whatever remnants exist enable us to have some estimate of this side of Kashmir's past culture. Almost nothing is left for us to see from the architecture of the pre-Buddhist period. The most ancient ruins are those at Harwan and Ushkar which belong to Kushan period and are of the Buddhist type. They bear upon them the indelible marks of Indo-Greek influences of the Gandhara School. Though both these Buddhist structures evince the same plan as those in the Gandhara kingdom of the same period, ample use has been made of the local materials and suitable changes have been effected to adjust that material to the plan. In Ushkar good use has been made of the stone chip masonry obtained from local quarries. At Harwan the "diaper-pebble" style consisting of small round pebbles fixed with large and solid blocks has been freely pressed into service. "The terra-cotta tiles of Harwan in Kashmir (third century A.C.) depict knights on horseback, with bow and quiver of arrows, wearing long "frock coats" with the fluttering edges of the *Virpatta* (the hero's-band) as described by Kalhana. The tile paved courtyard of Harwan is extremely interesting on account of the portraits of ethnic types which are Central Asian as well as the style of dress and ornaments of the men and women of that age."[1]

The ruins of the temples during the Hindu period can be

[1] *River of Kings*, Page XXXII.

seen at Avantipur, Pattan, Martand, Tapar, Buniyar, Pandrethan, Loduv, Wangat, Parspore and several other places throughout the valley. The architecture of this period is surely reflective of the fusion of Vedic and Buddhist cultures. It possesses massive grandeur and has the rigidity and strength of the ancient Egyptian temples coupled with the grace of Greece. It has the simplicity of style and finish of the dressing. It gives an inkling into the mind of the Age and the simple living but high thinking of the architects who could design and the master builders who could erect such refined and beautiful structures. The celebrated temple at Martand is the finest specimen of this age. It was built by Lalitaditya in the beginning of the eighth century A.C. It is imposing in its dimensions being 63 feet long. The pillared quadrangle round the temple is 200 feet by 142 feet. The big edifice for the image of the sun-god stands surrounded by this colonnade of fluted pillars with intervening trefoil-headed recesses. The stone carving on the gateways is very fine, rich and elaborate and the pillars most of which are still standing present an attractive appearance.

The large temple at Ludov simpler and plainer in construction is similar in design to the angular-roofed viharas of Gandhara. It has no decorations, is circular internally though externally it is square in construction. It has a single arched entrance.

The two temples built by Avantivarman at his capital and known as Avantiswamin and Avanteshvara dedicated to Shiva and Vishnu impress the visitor with their sumptuousness, grandeur and magnificence. Their imposing gateways are still standing. The temples were built with huge blocks of lime stone, massive and durable. The peculiar style of architecture that was started by master-minds of Kashmir during the days of Lalitaditya or even earlier reached a stage of perfection during the rule of Avantivarman. The temples at Avantipura reveal the peace, progress and prosperity that prevailed in the country through the grace and charm of workmanship which built them.

The ruins of other big temples and edifices of this period tell the same tale of grandeur, strength, beauty and massiveness. But one need not confine oneself to them to have a picture of all that was great, grand and splendid in the architecture of ancient Kashmir. The smaller edifices are no less atractive. The temple at Pandrethan near Srinagar 18 feet square built in a tank is a thing of perennial beauty. It is made of sculptured stone and stands complete. The ceiling of this small structure shows the classic sculptured embellishments of the tenth century.

One cannot forget to mention the grand, but small by comparison, temple on the summit of Copadari Hill now called Shankaracharya by Hindus and Takhti-Sulaiman by Muslims. It sits like a head on the shoulders of a mountain-man and commands a marvellous look of the whole of Srinagar and most of the Valley including the Dal lake. Which patriot has not sat for hours at the base of the temple and mused over the past, present and future of Kashmir ? The place is inspiring indeed. The temple was rebuilt by Gopaditya in the sixth century A.C.

It is not correct to call this Kashmir architecture Hindu because it differs in certain essentials from the Hindu architecture of India. Just as the Shaiva philosophy evolved by the Kashmiri thinkers is not the same as the philosophy owned by the Hindus of the rest of India, similarly the Kashmiri architecture is not strictly speaking Hindu. Though basically Indo-Aryan in origin, it has evolved under the strong influence of Greco-Buddhist and the Gandhara Schools of Architecture. Besides, the local thought and talent have also played a considerable part in shaping plans and designs of the structures. Elements of Chinese architectural design are also suspected in it. For these reasons it is a class by itself and should not be confused with the Indian architecture.

It is difficult to accurately evaluate the progress of the ancient Kashmir in the matter of sculpture. Almost all the noble images of the gods and goddesses as well as other figures of deities in the shape of giants, birds, and beasts were destroyed.

But those that have survived and were unearthed during the last three or four decades speak highly of Kashmir's ancient art of sculpture. It appears that this art also flourished first during the Buddhist period when the views of the Mahayana School encouraged the sculptors to carve images of Lord Buddha in all forms. Jataka stories were mostly the subject of the artists. Later on the images of Shiva and Vishnu also were produced. "The allegory in the *Trika* philosophy was expressed in sculpture by the body of Shiva Ardha Narishvara (the lord who is semi-faminine) in which Shiva is united with his consort Parvati, the right hand side of the body being the male sex and the left hand side being of the female sex", writes R.S. Pandit. "Parvati (literally the Maid of the Mountain) is the Shakti or Energy of Shiva personified under a faminine form and united with him. Thus we see depicted in Art the varied aspects of the destructive and generative Energy as the Union of the male and female forms".[1] The emotions represented by a few images lying in the State Museum at Srinagar are precise and unforgettable.

Because of the enchanting surroundings which constantly inspire the head and heart of a sensitive and emotional being the Valley of Kashmir is the fittest place for the growth of the fine arts like painting, music and dancing. There are references in *Nilamatapurana* and other ancient books which show that painting was a well developed art in Kashmir during the earlier centuries of the Christian era. In the *Nilamatapurana* it is expressly laid down that the "temples and the *chaityas* must be adorned with pictures". Kalhana also mentions painted halls decorated from within which existed in the Valley during his times. Sir Auriel Stein discovered in 1931 a few manuscripts in Northern Kashmir which were beautifully bound in painted covers with attractive figures on them. On the walls of the Bota Masjid which lies below the castle-hill of Srinagar the pictures of Buddhist saints are to be found which are hidden by white wash. This Masjid was formerly a Buddhist temple.

As in other parts of India dancing girls were attached to

[1] *River of Kings*, Page XXIII.

the temples from very remote times in the Valley. The art of dancing was common in the respectable families and, according to Kalhana, princes and nobles were accepted connoisseurs of the noble art. Some of the dancing girls became consorts of kings of Kashmir. King Uchhala married one who belonged to a family of dancers. In the twelfth century dancing women of the temples took prominent part in the politics of the State. This shows what a tremendous influence the art of dancing had on the social life of the people in the early ages of the country.

There is hardly any one in the valley who is not a lover of music and does not sing. Tailors in their shops, carpenters at their work, labourers carrying the load, boatmen moving the paddle and the peasant transplanting the paddy-stalks, all hum a tune. From ancient times great musicians have sprung from the Valley. It is a significant fact that a Kashmiri, Sharangdeva, who lived in the first half of the thirteenth century, was the author of *Sangit Ratnakara* which is the most authoritative work on the Indian Music both in the north and in the south. It treats of *ragas*, instruments and other technical details of Indian Music. Many commentaries have been written on it in Sanskrit, Hindi and Telgu languages. King Harsha himself was a musician and a poet of high calibre. He also loved dancing. As a matter of fact he carried these noble tasks to the extreme which proved his undoing.

CHAPTER THREE

STRUGGLE THROUGH MEDIEVAL TIMES

KASHMIR came under the Muslim rule of the Sultans in or about 1339 A.C. Much confusion has been caused by the misreading of this great event by most of the Hindu as well as Muslim historians of the Valley. In order that we may understand and appreciate the revolutionary change that took place in the fourteenth century and which deeply affected the future course of social, cultural and political life in the Valley, we should know the historical background in which it occurred.

From the time of the Avanti Varman's death in 883 A.C. until the beginning of Mahmud Ghazni's invasion in the eleventh century, page after page of the *Rajtarangini* records only the bestiality and savagery of the low-born adventurers who misgoverned the country. During the century following 902 A.C. the rulership of the kingdom changed hands as many as eighteen times. Some times the kingdom changed hands frequently between two rivals as in the case of Partha and Chakravarman. The latter was murdered in the chamber of a Domba girl and such was the degradation of the court morality that in 937 A.C. murderers were engaged by the king's own wives to crush his knees with a large stone as he lay dying in the embrace of the girl.

The history of the two succeeding centuries is a sordid record of short reigns, murders, suicides, plots, conspiracies, rebellions, oppressions and extortions. In the words of Sir Francis Younghusband it was "a state of perpetual intrigue and assassinations, of struggles with brothers, cousins, uncles, before a chief even came to the throne; of fights for power with ministers, with the military, with the nobles when he was on it, of wearying, petty internecine wars ; of general discomfort, uncertainty and unrest". One king, Uchhala's successor

Radda alias Sanka, reigned only for a few hours of the night and his half brother Salhana for no more than eight months. Kings became puppets in the hands of this or that class of feudal lords or military chiefs. If one king was under the thumb of Damaras, another functioned at the behests of Tanttrins or Nyayaks. King Rajadeva packed the entire administration with the men of Lavanya (modern Lone) caste. There was no law nor order in the country. The rulers were profligate drunkards and their ministers and advisers were cruel men, with no intelligence, no statesmanship and no love of the homeland; clowns occupied responsible positions and became ministers; cowards and fools were appointed as commanders of the army. In the beginning of the twelfth century Kashmiris elected one Vopyadeva as their ruler in the hope that he will administer the country well. But he disgusted his admirers by his peurile acts. "He felt happy at the sight of large blocks of stones and ordered his ministers to increase the size of the smaller ones by making them drink milk of beasts." Jonaraja calls him "Rakshasa chief covered with grass".[1]

Of the monarchs of these centuries of misrule, Harsha (1089-1101 A.C.) is considered to be one whose rule was characterised by prudence and munificence towards men of learning. He was of powerful frame, great personal beauty, courageous and fond of display. But his spendthrift nature, his elaborate fashions in dress and ornaments and his multifarious extravagances soon involved him in debt. He levied all imaginable taxes but still the treasury was unable to meet his needs. He then began to rob the temples of their wealth. He did not stop with this. He laid his hands on and confiscated the images of gods in the temples made of precious metals in a villainous manner. "There was not one temple in a village, town or in the city which was not despoiled of its images by that Turushka King Harsha", says Kalhana. He adds: "He appointed Udayaraja prefect for seizing divine images. In order to defile the statues of gods he had excrements and urine poured over

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 5.

their faces by naked mendicants whose noses, feet and hands had rotted away. Divine images were dragged along by ropes round their ankles with spit instead of flowers."[1] With the unclean money that he got by these abominable and dreadful methods Harsha abandoned himself to more and more excesses of debauchery and profligacy. This reduced him to the necessity of levying more taxes. A tax was levied even on night soil by him. This drove the people to rise in revolt under the leadership of Ucchala and Sussala, the nephews of the king. The royal palace was set on fire, the queens were burnt to death, the heir-apparent was killed and the king himself was hunted down and mercilessly slain. Kalhana records that Harsha's body "naked like that of a pauper" was cremated by a compassionate wood-dealer.

A few decades later appeared a ruler Rajadeva (1213-1236 A.C.) who was greedy, conceited and cruel. According to Jonaraja, the king made it a point to insult the Bhattas, vanguard of the progressive intellectuals, plundered them and brought them to such a pass that every member of the community was heard to cry "I am not a Bhatta, I am not a Bhatta". Bhatta in Kashmiri means a learned Brahmin.

There were many floods, famines and epidemics during the century which reduced the vitality of the people to the lowest and decimated the population. Thousands died of starvation every year and many more were sold into slavery to foreigners.

It is not very difficult to imagine what must have been the plight of the people who had been subjected to such ruthless oppression continuously for hundreds of years. There was universal unrest in the Valley ; all classes of people were deeply afflicted and groaned under the weight of the misrule. The very air breathed a spirit of revolt. Only a small clique among the upper classes who ruled the country were making merry over the miseries of the masses. The structure of the Government and the fabric of the society had weakened to a dangerous

[1] *Rajtarangini*, Book VII, Verses 1091-1094.

point. They were ready to give way before the smallest stroke from any side.

When Sahadeva ascended the throne in 1300 A.C., Kashmir was ruled by "drunkards, gamblers and profligate women". As misfortune would have it, in 1319 A.C., a Tartar adventurer from the north, Zulqadar Khan, known as Dulcha, invaded the country. He had a big army under his command, which was however neither well armed nor adequately equipped. But the ferocious Tartars were able to create terror in the minds of the stricken-people and the demoralised, decrepit and weakened government. Sahadeva did not have the courage to face the invader. He fled to Kishtwar leaving the helpless people exposed to the depradations of Dulcha, which he and his hordes carried on for many months. Dulcha plundered the people, took slaves and set fire to the city of Srinagar. It was consoling to the Kashmiris that when after killing, harassing and impoverishing them for eight months, the plunderers went to leave the Valley at the advent of winter, the whole army perished in snow along with their leader.

A little before Dulcha's invasion, a Buddhist prince, Rinchen, son of Vakatnya, King of Western Tibet or Ladakh, had left his homeland after murder of his father in a rebellion and taken refuge at the court of Sahadeva. True to his culture and tradition the king granted not only asylum to Rinchen but also assigned a *jagir* to him for his maintenance. Sahadeva, though timid, inefficient and cruel, was still magnanimous and hospitable. Some years earlier in 1319 A.C., another man Shah Mir, a Muslim native of Swat valley in Dardistan, had come to Kashmir in search of employment. It appears that Kashmir kings had developed some fascination for the Muslims. King Harsha had some Muslim captains in his army. So when Shah Mir approached Sahadeva with the prayer for being allowed to live in the Valley it was readily accepted and a village was given to him as a *jagir*.

A third figure whose descendants were destined to play an important role in the history of Kashmir, also arrived in Srinagar at this time. He was Lankar Chak, a Buddhist prince

from Dardistan. Defeated by his brother, Lankar fled from his homeland and found a welcome asylum in Kashmir.

Shah Mir was a shrewd politician and a far-sighted statesman. He was keen observer of events and having lived in the city and moved among ruling circles and upper classes for half a dozen years, he knew the ins and outs of the administration of the time. He was also well acquainted with important people. He saw the possibilities and the opportunities that lay before him in the chaotic conditions prevailing at the time. He was advanced in years, widely experienced and sober in habits. Rinchen being of royal birth also appears to have possessed some intelligence about him. But both were fully conscious that, despite disturbed times, they could not aspire to rise to power without substantial support of public opinion. Undoubtedly, both were conspiring and intriguing, which was the only kind of politics known during those days. Undoubtedly also, they had realized the possibilities and the opportunities that a scheming brain could seize in the disturbed conditions of the country. But neither Rinchen nor Shah Mir had any armies of their own. Unless, therefore, they could enjoy some popularity both among the civilian officials and the army chiefs, they could not have been successful in their intrigues.

There can be no doubt that Sahadeva must have become unpopular with all classes of the people owing to his cowardice and desertion. Popular or unpopular, he did not become the king again for, after his flight to Kishtwar, he disappears from history and we do not hear any more about him.

By the time Dulcha and his army were buried in their snowy graves, Shah Mir and Rinchen appear to have begun to become favourites with some feudal lords, court officials and army chiefs. Perhaps they had rendered some public service and maintained the morale of the people during the dark days of the Tartar depredations. It seems people were prepared to acknowledge the sovereignty of Rinchen, though a new comer compared with Shah Mir, perhaps because he was a scion of a royal dynasty or because he worshipped at the shrine of Buddha whose religion was most popular for centuries in the Valley. The

patient and shrewd Shah Mir also supported him. There was opposition from Ram Chandra, the Commander-in-Chief and Prime Minister of Sahadeva, but he could not secure the help of politicians and had therefore to run away and take shelter in the fort at Gagangir in the Lar Pargana. Before long Rinchen defeated Ram Chandra through a stratagem and killed him in a battle outside the fort. Kashmir needed a strong, capable ruler and she found one in the person of the fugitive Buddhist. Jonaraja calls him "a lion among men".

As a gesture of goodwill towards the opponents and the survivors of the vanquished foe, Rinchen wisely married Kota, the daughter of Ram Chandra, and appointed his son Rawal Chandra as Commander of the army with Western Tibet and Lar as his *jagir*.

After his accession to the throne Rinchen wanted to become a Shaivite (Hindu) but was refused admittance into the fold by orthodox Brahmins. In his desperate hunt for a new faith, he met a Muslim saint called Bulbul Shah who had recently arrived from Turkistan. The persuasive teachings of the saint profoundly influenced Rinchen and so he embraced Islam.

On his conversion Rinchen assumed the name of Sultan Sadar-ud-Din. He built a mosque and a *khanqah* for his preceptor at the place which is now known by the name of Bulbul Lankar in Srinagar. Rinchen was very clever and alert. Even today Kashmiris remember him and if anyone is over clever and too active he is called "Rentun". But Rinchen was also just, merciful and as equitous as one could be during those hard times but he did not live long. He died in 1322 A.C. leaving behind him his widow and a son Haider.

Now a significant event occurred in the history of Kashmir. Kota Rani did not allow Haider to be proclaimed the successor to Sadar-ud-Din. Instead she invited one Udyanadeva, brother of Sahadeva, who had fled to Gandhara at the time of Dulcha's invasion. She married him and made him the king. Shah Mir, patient and sober as ever, did not object, supported Kota Rani's move and acknowledged the sovereignty of Udyanadeva. Pro-

bably he realised that Kota Rani had played her hand masterfully and catered for the sentiment of the people ; probably he knew that his own adherents and supporters were not yet numerous and that Kota Rani was beloved of the lords and nobles. Thus Islam suffered a reverse and the Hindus regained the sovereignty over Kashmir.

Unfortunately however Udyanadeva did not give a good account of himself. He did not prove worthy of the trust that Kota Rani reposed in him. He remained on the throne for fifteen years but lacked wisdom, courage and ability. He was cowardly and proved by his conduct that Kashmiri Hindus had exhausted all potentialities to rule and administer a good government. Had Kota Rani not kept the authority in her own hands and managed the government of the country while Udyanadeva acted as a nominal monarch, Hindu rule would have finally ended earlier than it actually did. Had Kota Rani lived and ruled at a little better time and had the social, political and economic conditions not become so appalling and chaotic by the misrule of so many wicked monarchs one after another, she would have surely shone like a luminous patriot. But misfortune dogged her footsteps.

Soon after Udyanadeva's installation as the king the Valley was invaded by yet another desperado, Urwan, also called Urdil by some historians and Achala by Jonaraja. Udyanadeva, as before, ran away in dread to Ladakh as he thought that Dulcha had turned up again. But Kota Rani stood firm and faced the invader heroically. She made a stirring appeal to her subjects and advised them to stand solidly behind her against the aggressive foreign hordes. Accordingly Kashmir for once during those dark times fiercely resisted and defeated the enemy who had to sue for peace. Shah Mir took a leading part in this patriotic war which endeared him to Kashmiris.

Notwithstanding his base desertion, Kota Rani invited Udyanadeva again and re-installed him on the throne. Only if Kota Rani's choice had been a better one she might have been able to preserve the Kashmir throne for Hindu kings. What she did failed to secure the approval of the people ; it also crea-

ted jealousy and deep indignation in the mind of scheming Shah Mir.

Udyanadeva died in 1338-39 A.C. Kota Rani had one son named Bola Rattan from him. When the throne became vacant the dowager queen over-ruled the claims of both Haider and Bola Rattan and herself ascended the throne. She was however afraid of Shah Mir because by this time he had made many friends among the feudal lords and army chiefs through his wisdom, patience, bravery and large heartedness. He was seventy-six years old and had lived in the Valley for more than twenty-six years. Kota Rani finding that it was not safe to live in Srinagar with supporters of Shah Mir all around, repaired to the fort of Andarkot near Sumbal which was once the capital of the State and still a flourishing town. Moreover, she appointed Bhikshana, an efficient, experienced and trusted noble, as her Chief Minister which proved an added cause for displeasure to Shah Mir as he thought his claims were ignored. The time had ripened now and the road for revolt was open. Shah Mir had only to raise his banner and people came under it in large numbers. He swooped upon Andarkot and murdered Bhikshana by a base trick. This decided the fate of the contending parties. With the loss of her trusted Prime Minister, Kota became helpless and had to surrender. It is said that she accepted the proposal of Shah Mir to marry him but eventually over-powered by grief and disappointment, the sensitive, self respecting and patriotic queen committed suicide. Thus was laid the foundation of the Muslim Rule in Kashmir in 1339 A.C.

I have narrated these historic events in detail to show that Muslims did not enter the Valley as conquerors or plunderers. There were no doubt a few thousand Muslims, mostly new converts in the valley, but the Muslim rule was established mainly with the support of the local Hindus. Shah Mir worked his way to the top slowly, steadily and patiently ascending rung after rung of the ladder just as any ambitious Kashmiri Hindu politician would have done. There is no gainsaying the fact that he was an intriguer in the sense in which all politicians of that time without exception were intriguers and

designers. But it goes to his credit that he was neither a debauchee nor a profligate. His simplicity of character no less than his political acumen and intelligence made him popular which ultimately brought him to the throne. Shah Mir "assuaged the troubles of Kashmir and changed its conditions", writes Jonaraja[1] and in the words of Wolseley Haig, he used "wisely and beneficially the power he had acquired. The Hindu kings had been atrocious tyrants whose avowed policy had been to leave their subjects nothing beyond a bare subsistence. He ruled on more liberal principles".[2]

The establishment of Shah Mir on the throne of Kashmir was not the triumph of an Islamic power struggling for supremacy in the State; it was not even the success of Shah Mir as an adventurer, intriguer or a politician though his qualities of head and mature experience did play a conspicuous part in the historic change. It was in reality triumph of the Freedom Struggle of the people who had been groaning under the misrule of the Hindu kings. Hindu polity had come to a dead end. It had exhausted all the possibilities of growth. It had stagnated, decayed and died. Again and again history afforded opportunity to the Hindu aspirants to kingship to start afresh, but, on every such occasion, they failed to grasp it and give a good account of themselves by improving the material, moral and intellectual condition of the people over whom they ruled. Even after a Muslim monarch, Sadar-ud-Din, had ruled the country for three years, a chance presented itself when Kota Rani invited Udyanadeva from Gandhara, but it proved to be the last. The ruling clique merrily went on enjoying a depraved and demoralised life of luxury while the people were passing through a period of misery, squalor, famine and want unknown in their history. To pacify his conscience, the timid, inefficient and worthless King Udayanadeva was devoting his leisure to worship in the temple while thousands were dying

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 32.

[2] *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. II, Page 277.

by hunger and pestilence. To such low depths the rulers had sunk during the chaotic conditions of the times.

The rule of the Muslims came as a blessing not only politically but intellectually and spiritually. It popularised Islam in Kashmir, which revolutionised the thinking of the people and their whole attitude to life. Politics had dehumanised the Kashmiris; Islam made them men again.

Just as the Muslim rule was established in Kashmir without much bloodshed so was Islam spread throughout the length and breadth of the Valley by peaceful preachings and lucid persuasions of Mir Sayyid Ali and hundreds of the Sayyid missionaries who came from Hamadan and other parts of Persia. "Islam made its way into Kashmir not by forcible conquest", says Sir M.A. Stein in his introduction to English translation of *Rajtarangini*, but by gradual conversion for which the influx of foreign adventurers, both from the south and from Central Asia, had prepared the ground".[1] The reason why Islam spread in the Valley rapidly and peacefully can be easily explained when it is known that the *Trika* philosophy which the Kashmiri Hindus have evolved, is basically similar to the Islamic philosophy in many respects. The *Trika* and Islam both teach that:

(a) God is self-evident and does not stand in need of any proof.

(b) There is only one God, call him Allah or Ishvara as you like; there is none equal to him and no one to assist him.

(c) A man with no attachment to the world while living in the world is really out of it and even in this body he can see what ordinary man cannot see and perform extraordinary acts which others cannot do.

(d) Every thing is God in the sense that it exists in him. The soul is immortal and immaterial, taking delight in knowledge alone.

(e) There is nothing real but God. He is everywhere and everything. He is the source of all existence.

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[1] *Rajtarangini*, Vol. I, Page 130.

(f) Four necessities within the natural limit are not considered worldly, viz., food, garment, house, wife and children.

(g) One must live in society but resist passion.

(h) Appreciation of beauty. If one does not possess the capacity to appreciate the abstract beauty, he should train his mind to appreciate physical beauty.

(i) Both sexes have equal rights to spirituality.

(j) There is no distinction based on caste, colour or race among mankind.

With such similarities in the teachings of the old and the new faith, Hindus of Kashmir who were devoted followers of Shaivism did not find Islam obnoxious in any way. Rather they were happy to find a creed whose basic tenets were almost the same as their own with the additional merit that the new faith ushered in a strong government, the sore need of the times. Conversions therefore took place by thousands and before long the majority of people became Muslims by faith.

Had Kashmir not adopted Islam and the Muslim rule in the fourteenth century it is difficult to say what would have happened to it. It might have perished. Surely the powers that were generated among the people in various branches of creative life, such as learning, art and architecture, would not have come to play. By coming into contact with a new culture and civilisation as a result of Muslim rule, Kashmiris extricated themselves from the morass in which they had fallen and in which they were sinking deeper and deeper. Now they started their life afresh. Thinking was stirred, learning revived and fine arts were cultivated anew ; music, painting, dancing got a fresh start ; industry was introduced and zest for life strengthened. As I shall presently show, no sooner was anarchy ended and the Muslim rule well established master-minds began to reappear. The contribution of Kashmiris, both Hindu and Muslim, to Persian literature and thought is not negligible. Indeed it ranks very high in the literatures of the medieval times. It was Islam that revitalised the dead spirit of Kashmir. Without this fresh impetus even the production of original

writings by Hindu authors on philosophy, literature, religion, astronomy and other subjects in Sanskrit during the five centuries of the Muslim rule would not have been possible. Hindu intellect and mind would have stagnated and perished.

Shah Mir who assumed the title of Sultan Shams-ud-Din on ascending the throne did not live long to rule and died in his eightieth year in 1342 A. C. In his time two families rose to political power, They were first the descendants of Lankar Chak known as Chakresha (Chaks) and second a local clan called Margesha (Magre). Shah Mir was succeeded by his two sons Jamshed and Ala-ud-Din, the latter deposing the former after a reign of only one year or so. Lalla, the celebrated hermitess, lived during the reign of Ala-ud-Din.

The first really great king of the Muslim period was Shahab-ud-Din who came to the throne in the year 1354 A.C. By this time the government had been firmly established, law and order had been restored, the wounds inflicted by Dulcha and Urdil had been healed and the recurrence of famines stopped by wise measures. People had again begun to live happy, peaceful and contented lives. The king therefore devoted his attention to foreign conquests. He thoroughly organised military forces, trained them for warfare and appointing two Kashmiri Hindus, Chandra Damara and Laula Damara, as his commanders started on a campaign. He conquered Baltistan, Ladakh, Kishtwar and Jammu one after another. Encouraged by these victories Shahab-ud-Din collected a big army of 50,000 infantry and 50,000 cavalrymen, recruits from the hilly areas of Poonch, Rajouri, and Uri. He then swooped down on Sind inflicting a crushing defeat on the ruler. Thereafter he proceeded towards north attacking and defeating the kings of Udabhanda (Ohind) and Purushpura (Peshawar). Thereafter he subdued Kashgar, Badakshan and Kabul.

Like Lalitaditya, Shahab-ud-Din had the irrepressible desire to conquer and like him all his expeditions were successful. "Deer-eyed women attracted not his mind, nor the pleasures of drinking, nor the light of the moon. Only the march with his army occupied the king's attention", writes Jonaraja. "Neither

heat nor cold, nor evening nor night, neither hunger nor thirst obstructed his march. When this proud king was on the march, he found no difficulty in crossing unfordable rivers, inaccessible mountains and barren deserts".[1] Such was his inner urge to conquer the foreign lands. It was the second time in history that the Kashmiris proved their military prowess. "Shahab-ud-Din in Kashmir history figures next to Lalitaditya Mukhtapida", writes Sufi.[2] The fame of the successful exploits of Shahab-ud-Din reached far and near and the kings began to shake on their thrones. It was the time of the Tughluks in India; the dynasty was declining. Udakpati, Raja of Nagarkot (Kangara), had made an incursion into the territories of Firuz Tughluk and was returning with spoils and loot when he heard that the King of Kashmir was encamping on the banks of Sutluj. With humility Udakpati laid his gains at the feet of Shahab-ud-Din and acknowledged his overlordship.

If Shahab-ud-Din was great in conquering foreign countries by his military might he was greater in preserving, protecting and advancing the culture of Kashmir. He was a lover of learning and patronised art and architecture. He was married to a Hindu lady named Laxmi and in her honour founded a town Lachhmi Nagar at the foot of the Hari Parbat hill. He also founded two more towns Shahabdinpura (modern Shadipur) and Shahpur (now a mohalla Shyampur in Srinagar). Many of the king's ministers, advisers and army commanders were Hindus on whom he reposed complete trust.

It was in the year 1375 A.C. that Syed Mir Ali Hamadani, popularly known in Kashmir as Shah Hamadan, dreading persecution at the hands of Timur, came to Kashmir where Shahab-ud-Din's brother in the king's absence welcomed him according to the time-honoured traditions of the land. After staying for four months he returned but came back in 1379 A.C. accompanied by hundreds of Sayyid missionaries to preach Islam.

Shahab-ud-Din had the highest regard for the religious

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. IIII, Page 38.
[2] *Kashir* Vol. I, Page 136.

sentiments of his subjects. Once, when in sore need of money, the King's minister Udayasri suggested that the brass image of the Brihadbuddha lying in a famous temple might be melted to mint coins, Shahab-ud-Din felt so indignant at this that the minister did not have the courage to approach him again. It is not surprising that he was loved equally by Hindus and Muslims for his just rule and humane administration. Shahab-ud-Din ruled for 19 years and died in 1373 A.C.

But the progress and prosperity of people did not remain uninterrupted. At the death of Shahab-ud-Din's successor, Qutub-ud-Din, in 1389 A.C. there came to the throne of Kashmir a ferocious bigot, a cruel fanatic and a religious zealot who brought the noble traditions of the Kashmir culture and the fair name of Islam into disgrace. His name was Sikandar and he was only eight years old at the time of his accession to the throne. So long as he was a minor, his mother, the dowager queen Haura or Sura Begum, and the senior ministers of the State Council administered the country and nothing very serious happened. But when Sikandar acquired maturity, his fanatical zeal for the spread of Islam seized him and he became tyrannical towards his Hindu subjects. He levied new taxes including the *Jazia* poll-tax upon them. Not satisfied with this, he began to persecute them in other ways. On mere pretexts Hindus began to be imprisoned and tortured. No religious ceremonies could be performed by them in their houses or temples. After some time in power, Sikandar ran amuck ; he looted temples, broke images and demolished the structures. "There was no city, no town, no village, no wood", writes Jonaraja; "where the temples of gods were unbroken". Sikandar broke the images of Martanda, Vishaya, Ishana, Chakrabhrit, Tripreshwara and Shesha. "When Sureshvan, Varaha and others were broken", continues the historian, "the world trembled but not so the mind of the wicked king. He forgot his kingly duties and took delight day and night in breaking images".[1] With the material of the dismantled temples, Sikandar built mosques, *khanaqahs* and *madarassas.* At the site of a grand temple of Shiva he construc-

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Pp. 59-60.

ted the *Jama Masjid* which after several additions and alterations stands to this day. He also built the magnificent Khanqah-i-Moulla at the site of the Kali temple in 1395 A.C. He did all this in the name of his love for Islam. Unmindful of the traditions, usages and culture of the land over which destiny had brought him to rule, Sikandar had a passion for enforcing religious law in all State affairs.

Becoming apprised of Sikandar's religious zeal, fanatics from all Muslim lands poured into the Valley during his time, which further strengthened him in his determination to execute the vicious policy that was undermining the very foundations of the State. "As the wind destroys the trees, and the locusts the *Shali* crop, so did the Yavanas (religious fanatics) destroy the usages of Kashmir", says Jonaraja. "Attracted by the gifts and honours which the king bestowed on them and by his kindness the Mlechhas entered Kashmir even as locusts enter a good field of corn."[1] "The Sultan was now fired with the zeal to change the character of his rule into an Islamic administration and a considerable advance was made in this direction", writes Sufi his great admirer. "As his orders to this end were carried out either by recent converts to Islam or other officials, it may be presumed that these converts and officials were not actuated only by zeal for the faith ; many offences must have been committed which may have wounded the susceptibilities of the Hindus."[2]

Incredibly enough Sikandar was married to a Hindu lady, Sri Shoba Mahadevi; his Prime Minister was a Hindu Rai Magre as was also his Commander-in-Chief Achaladeva. Achala embraced Islam and came to be known as Abdal Raina. But Rai Magre raised the banner of revolt, seized Ladakh and declared his independence. He fought valiantly but was vanquished in a big battle, arrested and put in prison where he died. There were other commotions in the kingdom which the king suppressed mercilessly. Sikandar got books of learning in Sanskrit burnt "even as fire burns grass". Therefore scholars

[1] *The Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 58.
[2] *Kashir*, Vol I, Page 147.

precipitately fled to distant lands taking their books with them. When the bigot's unquenchable thirst for persecution of non-Muslims did not abate, thousands of Hindus decided to bid good bye to the land of their birth. They were allowed to leave their homes but military men were posted at the borders who stopped their exodus. The miserable Hindus therefore went into hiding in the houses of their Muslim compatriots who also helped many to cross the borders stealthily. Thousands of independent intellectuals committed suicide but did not bow before the tyrant's fanaticism. "Struck by fear some Brahmins killed themselves by means of poison, some by the rope, others by drowning themselves in water, others again by falling from a precipice and others burnt themselves."[1]

Sikandar's policy of persecution was disliked by the Kashmir Muslims. Against his explicit wish and at the risk of incurring his displeasure, Muslims gave shelter to innumerable Hindus who had come under suspicion.

Sikandar is the blackest spot on the bright history of Kashmir. He was the anti-thesis of the great and noble culture which Kashmiris had evolved through thousands of years of their ancient history. He is known as "But Shikan" (the inconoclast) and all fair-minded historians, Muslim as well as Hindu, have with one voice condemned his misdeeds. Jonaraja has made Suhabhatta alias Malik Saif Din, a Brahmin convert to Islam, who was one of the chief advisers of the king, also responsible for the policy of persecution. "But it must be distinctly remembered that this sort of religious zeal is deplored by Islam", writes Sufi. "It positively prohibits it. It is on record that Mir Mohammed Hamadani warned Suhabhatta against such action and pointed out to him the well known verse of the Quran (II, 256) which runs 'Let there be no compulsion in Religion."[2] In Kashmir even to this day anyone with evil nature is called "Buthishigun" (But Shikan).

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[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 66.

[2] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 106.

As if Sikandar's deeds are not heinous enough, many Hindu historians have exaggerated his atrocities beyond limit and given the fullest liberty to their imaginations in doing so. What is worse, on the basis of Sikandar's atrocities the entire class of Muslim Kings is denounced and Islam itself is put up as an intolerant creed. Such criticism is not only entirely groundless but it is positively dangerous and mischievous as it creates bitterness between the Muslims and Hindus residing in the State and prevents them to live amicably together.

It was the good fortune of the people of Kashmir that the fanatic king died young at the age of thirty-two in the year 1413 A. C. before the foundations of Kashmir culture had been seriously impaired. And, happily, whatever harm he had been able to do, was undone by one of his immediate successors, the illustrious, the noble and the reputed Bud Shah.

It is puzzling that occasionally in History the sons and successors of tyrants are noble kings or the reverse takes place when kind-hearted and liberal monarchs give birth to despots and cruel rulers. Sikandar was first succeeded by his elder son Ali Shah who ruled only for seven years till 1420 A.C. when the throne passed to the younger brother Shahi Khan who is known to history as Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin or Bud Shah as he is affectionately called by the people of Kashmir.

Bud Shah had already served his country as the Prime Minister of his elder brother before he ascended the throne and had given a glimpse of his future greatness. On assuming the rulership of the country, the first thing he did was to restore confidence among all classes of people in himself by his acts of generosity and statesmanship. He abrogated all iniquitous laws that Sikandar had put on the statute book to persecute Hindus. The poll-tax and other impositions levied on the non-Muslims were remitted. "When my father died," says Srivara, "I informed the king of the cremation tax and the king punished the *kiralas* and abolished the rate on the cremation of the dead. From that time the common people on their death are cremated on the spot, to the grief of the Mlechhas who are averse to witness

cremation. The *bhurjja* makers (who burn the dead) danced with their umbrellas, and played on musical instruments on this exemption from tax".[1] Bud Shah declared that Hindus were to be governed by their own personal laws and not by the *Shariat*. Indeed he got an assurance from the demoralised Hindus that they would not act in contravention of what was written in their own *Shastras*. He released all Hindus who had been imprisoned and recalled those Brahmins and other intellectuals who had migrated from Kashmir. Those who had gone into hiding also came out to live openly like other free citizens of the State. Complete religious independence was granted to followers of all creeds in the country.

Bud Shah was not satisfied with the negative policy of non-persecution. He went further. He rebuilt the temples that had been demolished by Sikandar and were lying in ruins. Within the palace known as Sidhapuri, Bud Shah repaired dilapidated temples by props or rebuilt them, says Srivara. "And above the palaces he built the two temples of Martanda and Amarnatha which illumined the distant sky".[2] He opened *pathshalas* and *vidyalayas* for students to study religious scriptures in Sanskrit. Scholarships were awarded to Hindu students to enable them to go to Banaras and the Deccan for higher studies. *Jagirs* were assigned to Hindu institutions. And to respect the religious susceptibilities of his Hindu subjects, Bud Shah forbade the killing of cows.

Bud Shah was himself a student of Sanskrit. He studied the Hindu Philosophy and loved to recite stanzas from *Yog Vasishta* throughout his life. As a matter of fact, when his sons rebelled against him in his old age and he felt restless and dejected, this scripture was a source of solace to him. Often he asked the historian Srivara, who was one of his courtiers, to read portions of it to him at a quiet place in his palace. Srivara says that the king caused the *Puranas*, books of Logic, the *Mimansa* and other books to be brought from distant lands and distributed them to the learned. "The King heard me recite the *Vasishta* and *Brahma Darshana* composed by Valmiki."[3]

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, page 143.

[2] Ibid, Vol. III, Page 143.

[3] Ibid, Vol. III, Pp 145-46.

Prompted by the example of the king, Muslims too studied Hindu scriptures, says Srivara. "The Mlechhas (Muslims) read the *Vrihat Katha Sara*, the *Hatkeshwara Samhita*, the *Puranas* and other books in their own language". " He was the destroyer of evils, and he preserved by various means the good usages of Kashmira even as a physician helps our digestive functions by medicines,"[1] concludes Srivara. "During Bud Shah's reign Hindu traditions re-asserted themselves while the country enjoyed a return to its old prosperity", states Sufi.

A narrow-minded man is apt to think that because of this liberal attitude towards Hindus and Hinduism, Bud Shah was less interested in Islam. That is not true. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin was a devout Muslim and did his best to spread the teachings of the Faith. He invited great scholars of Muslim Philosophy, Theology and Jurisprudence and appointed them to high posts. Maulana Kabir, a Kashmiri, who had in his youth migrated to Herat was induced to return and hold the office of Sheikh-ul-Islam or Head of the Ecclesiastical Department. He was also the Vice-Chancellor of the Dar-ul-Ulum, the University. He invited Sayyid Hussain Qummi Rizvi, a learned theologian, who had dedicated himself to the preaching of Islam and the Bagh-i-Zainagir was made his headquarters. He appointed Qazi Jamal-ud-Din, a scholar of great repute, who had come from Hindustan and lived an austere life at Khanqah of Shah Hamadan, as the Chief Justice for the whole kingdom.

Other notable Muslim courtiers were Mulla Ahmad Kashmiri who translated, besides *Rajtarangini*, *Mahabharta* into Persian; Hafiz Baghdadi and Mulla Parsa and Mulla Nadiri, the Poet Laureate.

Among the notable Hindu courtiers of Bud Shah were, besides (1) Jonaraja and (2) Srivara, the two historians who have already been often mentioned in this book, (3) Uttasom, Head of the Translation Bureau, (4) Yodhabhatta of marvellous memory who was deputed by the king to Maharashtra to study *Atharva Veda*, (5) Tilakacharya, the Buddhist (6) Simha,

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 78.

the Astrologer, (7) Karpurbhatta, the Physician (8) Rupyabhatta, the Astronomer, (9) Ramananda, the Chemist, and (10) Shivbhatta, the Physician.

In glaring contrast to Suhabhatta or Malik Saif Din, the Chief Minister of Sikandar, there lived in the time of Zain-ul-Abidin a great Pandit whose name deserves to live for ever. He was Shri Bhatta and is now known as Shari Bhatta. The king was suffering from a boil which baffled all physicians but was healed by some ointment supplied by Shari Bhatta. Thus gratified the King commanded the physician to ask for any royal favour which would be granted for the mere asking. But the great Pandit would have nothing for himself and the various boons asked for and granted were meant to help the persecuted community of Brahmins to live peaceful and honourable lives. This incident occurred in the very beginning of Zain-ul-Abidin's reign. Bud Shah highly appreciated this spirit of sacrifice in the Brahmin physician and ultimately appointed him as an officer for the encouragement and study of Medicine. The locality where he practised is still known as *Sharibhattun wan* at Haval in Srinagar.

Bud Shah was a great lover of poetry, music and painting. He derived pleasure and delight by the company of intellectuals and artists who were always present in large numbers in his court.

Simultaneously with his laudable efforts to restore confidence among all classes of people, Bud Shah devoted his energies to establish law and order in his kingdom. He formulated a code of secular laws, engraved it on copper plates and had it placed prominently in markets and halls of justice. Never in his life did the king tolerate any defiance of law and criminals, however influential and highly placed, were duly punished. He did not spare his foster-brother whom he got executed for murder Yet Bud Shah abhorred bloodshed and did not approve of heavy punishment for petty crimes. "Knowing that low caste men take themselves to thieving when in want of means of livelihood, the king gave them provisions."[1] He introduced prison

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 101.

reforms, stopped branding of prisoners and started industries like pottery and mat-making in prison for the benefit of the inmates.

Having restored law and order and having gained the goodwill of all his subjects, Bud Shah like Avantivarman devoted his whole attention to economic betterment and the welfare of the country. First he revived the indigenous industries, shawl weaving, pottery, carpentry and fine works. Afterwards he invited mechanics, industrialists, architects and craftsmen from Hindustan and Iran. Through them he introduced paper making, silk weaving, wood carving and silver smithy. Almost all the industries that are flourishing in the present-day Kashmir have had their beginnings in the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin. He discovered copper mines and worked them. It was in his time that gold dust was found in the river at Ladakh.

Like Avantivarman again the intelligent Zain-ul-Abidin saw that the prosperity of the people depended on good agriculture. He had no Suyya to assist him but he designed several irrigation projects, constructed canals and aqueducts thereby making large tracts of land arable. His Zainagir canal and Shah Kuhl are to this day irrigating thousands of acres of land in north and south of the Valley. Land assessment was revised and farmers and peasants were protected from illegal exactions of officials.

Zain-ul-Abidin constructed roads and bridges over many canals to encourage traffic and facilitate carrying of merchandise from one part of land to another. The king devoted his attention to medical science as well and opened hospitals for men as well as women.

Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin had a passion for architecture. He built towns, palaces, mosques, islands, canals, bridges, gardens, temples and monasteries. Ruins of many of these may still be seen throughout the length and breadth of the valley. These are almost all in his name. Some of them are called Zaina Kot, Zainagir, Zaina Kadal, Zaina Lank, Zaina Math, Zaina Pattan, Zaina Gam, Zaina Kundal and Zainapur. He built innumer-

able *carvansarais* and rest houses by the road-side for the convenience of travellers.

Having made his country secure and prosperous, Bud Shah planned to go on military expeditions towards the close of his reign between 1460-70 A.C. He conquered the Punjab, Kulu and Ladakh. Bud Shah died in his seventieth year in 1470 A.C. when he had ruled for nearly fifty-one years. "No one cooked his food that day, no smoke arose from the houses, all were dumb with grief and breathless. Such was the state of capital which seemed to be without life".[1]

If tolerance for other people's views, encouragement to independent thinking, patronage of learning, respect for all religions, refuge to the persecuted and equal justice for all, are the distinguishing features of the cultural heritage of Kashmir, it is unquestionable that Zain-ul-Abidin Bud Shah was the most representative king during the medieval times to represent that culture in himself. In his long reign the Valley witnessed unprecedented progress and enjoyed a prosperity that had not been known for many centuries. Though historians have classified him as a Muslim monarch, it is difficult to prove that he belonged to any particular faith or religious creed. It is well known that "he was not only a patron of Sanskrit learning, he used to go on pilgrimage to the ancient *Tirthas* of the Valley".[2] As a matter of fact while Muslims have owned Zain-ul-Abidin as a co-religionist, Hindus have always believed that he was Bhat Shah (the Brahmin King), a *Tapasvi* of a very high order who had taken birth as a Sultan of Kashmir merely to restore the Hindu Dharma to its deserved place. A modern-minded patriot might contend that the very name, Bud Shah, and his works are ample proof that he was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim but essentially a Kashmiri who built a progressive and a secular State on the foundations of the composite Kashmir culture which had been evolved through thousands of years till his own day.

Let that be as it may. These past five centuries have

[1] *Kings of Kashmira,* Vol. III Page 173.

[2] *Rajtaragini* edited by A. Stein Vol. I, page 131.

not diminished the affection that the Kashmiris have cherished in their hearts for the great monarch. Verily with the passage of time and the freedom and independence of our homeland eluding our grasp, Bud Shah is becoming more and more a national symbol of tolerance, patriotism, liberty, progress, learning and all that Kashmir culture stands for.

Bud Shah had set up a very high standard of administration which his graceless and petty-minded son Haji Khan could not maintain. Haji Khan alias Haider Shah was a vain and cruel man. One day he invited the ministers of his father whom he had dismissed because they stood loyally by the side of their master when the son rose in rebellion to capture the throne. Seated in a room of the palace the royal servants beheaded them all under orders of the king.[1]

Haji Khan took a fancy for one barber named Purna also called Riktetara. The low-cultured barber soon rose to power and indulged in atrocities and brutalities against those whom he did not like. Killing by ordinary methods could not satiate his hunger for torture of innocent men. His victims were high and low, poor and wealthy. "The relentless and the sinful barber", writes Srivara, "cut off the Thakuras and the courtiers of the King's father by the saw". On another occasion he got a few persons impaled on the road-side. For three days and nights the unfortunate men lived like this shrieking till death ended there agony.[2]

Purna instigated Brahmins to rise against the Muslim rule and when they did so he advised the king to suppress them. A period of cruel persecution followed. "During this time of the pillage of the property of the Brahmins they gave up their caste and their dress and exclaimed 'I am not a Bhatta, I am not a Bhatta'." "There were in the city many rich and principal gods and the king ordered the plunder of their images at the instigation of the Mlechhas".[3] But Haider Shah ruled only for two years and soon after the death of his patron, Purna found him-

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 192.
[2] Ibid, Vol. III, Page 187.
[3] Ibid, Vol. III. Page 196.

self in prison and there in a dingy cell he died by inches brooding over his evil past.

Haider Shah's successor Hassan Shah revived the liberal policy of his grandfather, Bud Shah. He patronised learning and himself closely studied the six schools of Hindu Philosophy. He loved music passionately and had twelve hundred musicians at his court. But he was careless and ease-loving. His queen came from a family of Sayyids who were foreigners. During the latter part of his rule the king patronised the Sayyids. As they were not only religious bigots but also "regarded people of Kashmir scarcely even as grass" they became unpopular and were hated in the Valley. Patroits like Jayalala Thakkura, Saif Damara, Jahangir Magre and Jonarajanaka joined hands to oust them. It was the last named who ultimately killed the whole family despite the royal support, to the relief of the people of Kashmir. But the decline and decay of the Shah Miris had set in. Intrigues and plots became the order of the day and justice a thing of the past. In Hassan Shah's time, according to Srivara, "accepting bribes was considered by the officers of the State as a virtue, oppressing the subjects was regarded as wisdom and addiction to women was regarded happiness".[1]

The struggle for throne between two kings, Mohammed Shah and Fath Shah, during the period of 32 years from 1484 to 1516 A. C. remind one of the ignominious tussle between Partha and Chakravarman for 31 years from 906 to 937 A.C. By turns both of them came to the throne, the former three times and the latter as many as five times. They did not wield the real power and were pawns in the hands of their nobles. Damaras and Nyayaks had ceased to be a force in politics. Two new families Margesha and Chakresha, already mentioned, reached the top and had become the king-makers in Kashmir. Some of the nobles who wielded influence and took leading part in politics were Tazi Butt, Jayalala Thakura, Jonarajanka, Saif Dar, Shams Chak, Musa Raina, Ibrahim Magre, Jahangir Padar and Abdal Magre.

But the most prominent of all nobles who decided the

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 252.

fate of the kings and the politics of the country for nearly two decades was Kaji Chak known also as Kanchan Chakresha or Kacha Chakra. He was the descendent of Lankar Chak who as we know came as a refugee from Dardistan in the time of Sahadeva and was granted asylum by the King of Kashmir.

None of these nobles was scrupulous, honest, sincere or straight-forward in his politics. They were all self-seekers, time-servers, opportunists, intriguers and mean. They would become patriots, defenders of the faith, representatives of the people or the upholders of freedom if by doing so they could attain the object of their ambition. Capture of power was the only goal of their lives. Magres conspired to overthrow the Chaks and the latter in turn did the same to defeat the former. But having attained this object, Chaks would fight among themselves and so did Magres. On Fath Shah's accession in 1986 A.C. the foreigners bribed the ministers of the State and the ministers allowed them three days to plunder the city.[1]

In or about 1487 A.C. Shams-ud-Din Iraqi, a Muslim preacher of Shia faith, came from Talish to Kashmir during the first period of Fath Shah's rule. He had been exiled by the Governor of Khurasan and sought asylum in the Valley. He was a reputed scholar and by his persuasive teachings, no less than by his noble and examplary character, converted Hussain Chak, a powerful noble, to Shia faith. Soon many thousands of Kashmiris, both Hindus as well as Muslims, accepted the new creed. This introduced one more element in the social life of the people which unhappily contributed a further cause for prevailing disturbances in politics. Just as the first converts to Islam in the beginning of Shah Mir's rule were enthusiastic, vigorous and zealous about their religion, the first followers of the Shia creed too exhibited a similar energy for the spread of their faith. They went one better. Since the Chaks espoused the cause of Shiaism their rivals, the Magres, became its opponents. Fath Shah had come to power with the help of Chaks. He therefore granted all confiscated lands to Mir Shams-ud-Din and gave him facilities to carry on his

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol III, Page 334.

proselytising activities. But only a few years after the Shia divine was forced to flee when with the help of Ibrahim Magre and others Mohammed Shah defeated Fath Shah in a battle in 1493 A.C. Under the new regime Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi was banished which incensed Chaks and those Kashmiris who had accepted the Shia faith. In all the subsequent regimes the Shia-Sunni feud played a prominent part and heinous crimes were committed by politicians in the name of religion. To the devastating Hindu-Muslim strife was now added the demoralising Sunni-Shia conflict which made the lot of the people most miserable.

It was not surprising that, under these disturbed conditions, a general restlessness existed in the valley among all classes of people and Babur, the Mughal adventurer, who had already captured Delhi, should try his luck in Kashmir too. The wonder however is that even in such deteriorated times these cantenkerous nobles should forget their own quarrels and enmities, bury the hatchet and offer a joint front to the foreign invader. The nobles rallied round one man to defend their country. Such a leader was Kaji Chak who, fired with the spirit of patriotism, commanded an army, met the invading Mughals and forced them to retire. But this love of the motherland was only skin-deep. Politics, born of party, clique, group or communal mentality never allows one to adopt high principles of patriotism and humanism for long. Not many years after this incident, the prominent leaders of Magres and Chaks and other nobles themselves, turn by turn, approached the Emperors at Delhi to attack Kashmir and bring it under their suzerainty. The first to do so was Abdal Magre, rival of Kaji Chak. Abdal secured a large army from Babur and invaded Kashmir when Ibrahim Shah, a puppet in the hands of Kaji Chak, was on the throne.

A very interesting thing happened at this time. It appears Babur had fully realized the force of Kashmir Nationalism which foiled his first campaign. He therefore played a trick to hoodwink the Kashmiris. He used a scion of the Shah Miri dynasty, one Nazuk Khan, as a tool declaring that the

people of Kashmir disliked Ibrahim Shah and wanted Nazuk Khan to be on the throne. This was done with the view that the Kashmiris might not think that foreign rule was to be imposed upon them at the successful termination of the invasion. Strangely enough, when Kazi Chak and his puppet were defeated and forced to flee, Nazuk Khan did not rule for more than a few months. He was deposed and Mohammed Shah, an ex-king, was re-installed on the throne.

However, Mughals again failed to establish their supremacy because of the vicissitudes of Humayun's luck in the beginning of his reign. But the Mughal invasion came in another shape and from the north. Abu-Sayyid Mirza, King of Kashgar, sent an army under the leadership of his son Sultan-zada Sikandar and a soldier-statesman Mirza Haider Dughlat to attack Kashmir and conquer it. Kashmir Nationalism again rose up to the occasion. Kaji Chak came to its rescue once more. But this time it ended unhappily. The Mughals inflicted a crushing defeat on the Kashmiris The vanquished forces were pursued, captured and slain mercilessly. But this did not dishearten the Kashmiris. Indeed it only forced Magres and Chaks to forget the past. Both Abdal Magre and Kaji Chak combined their forces and pressed the Mughals so hard that the invaders were compelled to sue for peace. The Mughals retired but left behind them death, desolation and hunger The people were reminded of the days when Dulcha and Urdil had devastated their beautiful land.

This victory did not produce any sobriety or humility in the nobles. They were quite blind to the misery all round. Flushed with his power which increased immensely by now, Kaji Chak became vain, conceited and cruel. He advanced his own interests and contracted matrimonial relations with the royal dynasty. This, coupled with his high-handed behaviour, made him unpopular with the people and an object of jealousy for the nobles and rival politicians. The Magres approached Humayun but though he could not directly help, being himself harassed by Sher Shah Sur, the Mughal Emperor allowed Mirza Haider Dughlat to lead an expedition to help

Magres. This was the third attempt of the Mughals. Kashmir was in utter confusion in 1540 A.C. Therefore the Mirza easily defeated the Kashmir forces and deposed King Ibrahim Shah II. Kaji Chak fled and approached Sher Shah Sur for help.

Mirza Haider was a shrewd politician and had known to his cost the intensity of Kashmir Nationalism He considered it indiscreet to occupy the throne himself. He put ex-King Nazuk Shah on it and himself remained content with being the power behind the throne. It seems he wanted to be liberal and progressive. But he fell out firstly with Chaks and soon with all Shias. Kaji Chak obtained an army of five hundred horsemen from Sher Shah Sur and invaded Kashmir but was defeated. This incident aggravated the bitterness between Mirza Haider and the Shia community He resorted to ruthlessness, cruelty, torture and suppression. Many Shias were wantonly killed. Even Daniyal, the son of Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi, was not spared and was executed. This was in violation of the time-honoured traditions of Kashmir. A rebellion broke out under the leadership of Idi Raina, Hussain Magre, Mohammed Kaji and Haji Bande. Both Shias and non-Shias joined the insurrection in which the partisans of Mirza were routed and he himself was slain. Mirza wanted to exterminate the Shias and establish the sole supremacy of the Sunnis in Kashmir but ultimately he was consumed by the fire of the religious strife which he himself had ignited. After the fall of Mirza Haider, Idi Raina became the Prime Minister and the influence of Chaks grew unprecedented Kaji Chak had meanwhile died but Ghazi Chak and Daulat Chak both Shias had risen to power. The descendants of Shah Mir were now kings only in name and were puppets in the hands of the Chaks. One day, in 1555 A.C., Ghazi Chak's brother Ali Chak took off the crown from the head of Sultan Habib Shah, the last king of the dynasty, in the open court and placed it on the head of his brother. This was the recognition of a fact and the end of a farce about the rulership of the land. All the courtiers hailed Ghazi Chak as the monarch. "There

appears to be no cause of lamentation over the displacement of the Shah Miri dynasty in Kashmir", says Sufi. "Its rulers had become quite effete. They sadly lacked the essential qualities of initiative and capacity to command. They also displayed weakness of character, and were not, therefore, capable of holding their place. It was only by divine mercy, or it might be said, the diffidence of the Chaks, that they were allowed to maintain the role of supernumerary kings under Chak domination. As a matter of fact, they should have long been displaced to make room for kings of vigour and virility".[1] Like Hindu Rajas of later period these Sultans had become debauched, corrupt, cruel, wicked and dehumanised.

The small period of thirty-one years for which the Chaks ruled over Kashmir from 1555-1586 A.C., was characterised by religious fanaticism, ruthlessness, insecurity and poverty which they had inherited from the previous regime. Having been persecuted and ill-treated by Sunni politicians, the Chaks became narrow-minded and sectarian in views. They did not trust the non-Shias and were suspicious of every one outside their fold. Only Shias were recruited into the Army and most of the high posts in Government were also given to them.

Ghazi Shah persecuted Khwaja Tahir Rafiq Suhawardi, disciple of the Saint Hamza Makhdum and a religious leader of the Sunnis. He had to go into hiding and was given shelter by a Brahmin of Verinag, Aidar Suh. Many other Sunni preachers and divines were similarly hidden by their Pandit compatriots during Ghazi Shah's reign.

Hussain Shah Chak (1563-1570 A.C.) founded a college and lived in the society of pious and learned men in its precincts. He was a prince of very catholic views and tried to revive the liberalism and broad-mindedness in State affairs. "When such a king ruled Kashmira", writes Shuka, "the land became full with abundant crops of fruits and flowers. The king dispelled the fear from famine, from thief and from foreign potentate, and the people believed the Kingdom of Kashmira to be equal to heaven."[2] Hussain Shah set aside three days in a

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 212.

[2] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 392.

week to listen to the discourses of Muslim and Hindu religious scholars, but the times did not sympathise with him. The rot of fanaticism had set in which he could not check from spreading. Clashes between Shias and Sunnis reached a climax during his time. In 1568 A.C. a Shia fanatic attacked and wounded a Sunni preacher. Under orders of the king the fanatic was tried by two divines and found guilty. He was stoned to death. Just at this time two envoys from Akbar came to Kashmir. Being Shia they interested themselves in this incident and got the two divines tried by a Shia official. The official got the divines executed and their bodies were dragged through the streets. The authority of the Kashmir Kings had become so nominal that Hussain Shah proved helpless before Akbar's envoys who so easily and wantonly violated the sovereignty of the State by meddling into the internal matters and taking law in their own hands. Not the king but a deputation of Kashmiris approached Akbar and complained to him. Akbar accepted the appeal and on the return of the envoys, had them executed for religious bigotry.

Those who succeeded Hussain Shah did not even attempt to improve the matters. They were ease-loving, short-sighted, intolerant, mean and chicken-hearted. Yusuf Shah Chak (1574-1586 A.D.), the lover of the great poetess Habba Khatun, took more interest in romance than in the affairs of the State. The nobles became restive and rebelled. Confusion ensued. One of the nobles Sayyid Mubarak Khan Baihaqi was so influential that he assumed kingship for a few months in 1579 A.C. after deposing Yusuf Shah for his insolent behaviour. Baihaqi was an interesting person. He was of a philosophic bent of mind and humane in nature. He distributed his wealth among the needy; he even broke up his royal crown and gave the gems to the poor. He treated his nobles and courtiers like ordinary citizens. Clearly he was much in advance of his times. The haughty nobles and other upper classes joined hands to overthrow him. Shuka says that Momara Khan (Mubarak Khan) was imprisoned by his opponents after he had enjoyed the kingdom for one and a fourth of a month and all along he lived

in a temple.[1] But other historians write that before a battle would decide his fortune Mubarak Khan willingly abdicated in favour of Lohur Chak, a cousin of Usuf Chak. But Usuf defeated Lohur and regained the throne. Akbar was anxious to have the Valley and when he saw that the Chaks had made themselves unpopular he issued instructions to Raja Man Singh on 20 December 1585 A.C., to invade Kashmir. On getting information that the Mughal armies were on the march and about to enter the Valley the chicken-hearted Usuf Shah shivered. He was prepared to capitulate on terms which Man Singh accepted and advised the King of Kashmir to present himself before Akbar. The Mughal Emperor however rejected the terms and disallowed Usuf to return to his homeland. The sensitive Hindu General was deeply pained to find his pledged word dishonoured and committed suicide. Usuf was sent to Bihar where as a *jagirdar* he remained till the end of his life.

Meanwhile, as a last flicker of the dying Kashmir Nationalism, the patriotic nobles put Usuf's son Yaqub Khan on the throne and fought vigorously against the Mughal armies who suffered heavily owing to cold, scarcity of foodstuffs and difficulties of transport in the hilly regions and were prepared to return on any terms. But Yaqub Shah proved unfit as a ruler. His ministers relentlessly persecuted the Sunnis. The king got one Musa, Chief Qazi, killed in a cruel way. A deputation of Kashmiris led by Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi and Baba Daud Khaki waited upon Akbar and prayed for help to liberate the Valley from the tyranny and misrule of the Chaks. The patriots took care to see that the new rule did not prove worse than the one under which they were suffering. Therefore before assuring the Mughal emperor of the support of the Kashmiris in his annexation of the Valley to the Empire they entered into the following covenant with him:

1. That the ruling prince shall not interfere in religious affairs, the purchase and sale of commodities and the rates of cereals.
2. That the inhabitants of the country shall not be

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 397.

molested or oppressed in anyway or *begar* exacted from them.

3. That the dignitaries and officials of Kashmir shall have no Kashmiri male or female, Hindu or Muslim, as slave.
4. That the nobles of Kashmir having been a source of mischief shall have, for the present, no share in the administration of their country.

Two points in this covenant deserve notice. First, that it is entirely secular in character. It is meant to equally preserve the freedom of all Kashmiris irrespective of the religion they profess. Secondly, it is concerned about the welfare and freedom of the masses and not the upper classes. Indeed it is specifically against the interests of the nobles and the feudal lords.

When therefore the huge Imperial Armies of the Mughal Emperor marched upon Kashmir on 28th June, 1586 A.C., they did not meet with any great resistance. The unhappy Kashmiris welcomed the invaders as if they were entering the Valley to liberate them.

The Mughal rule lasted in the Valley for 166 years till 1752 A.C. Kashmir now became a province of the Indian Empire and was administered through the governors appointed by the Mughal Emperors. In all, sixty-three governors were deputed by the different Emperors to rule over the Valley. In the reign of Shah Alam, the governors appointed started a new baneful and pernicious practice of deputing their representatives to administer the country in their behalf while they themselves were engaged elsewhere with more important political affairs.

The rule of the governors on the whole did not prove satisfactory and beneficial for the people of the Valley. Some of them no doubt were benevolent, progressive and popular, who did a lot to improve the political and economic conditions but there were many others who proved to be tyrannical, barbarous and uncultured. They encouraged Hindu-Muslim factions and Sunni-Shia feuds or levied imposts and taxes on the

toiling classes which made their condition quite miserable. Time and again the people approached the Emperors to intervene and check the high-handed, anti-social and despotic behaviour of such governors and it should be said to the credit of the Mughal Kings that on various occasions they readily and sympathetically responded to the appeals of the victimised Kashmiris. The Mughal Emperors took keen personal interest in the affairs of Kashmir. Almost all of them had married Kashmiri women to beget fair-complexioned children. So long as the Central Government at Delhi remained stable, strong and progressive Kashmir more or less shared prosperity with other provinces and regions of the Empire. But when, in the later part of Aurangzeb's reign, the Mughal rule began to show signs of decline, Kashmir also was involved in confusion and chaos.

The first Viceroy of Kashmir whom Akbar appointed was Qasim Khan Mir Bahr who had conquered the country for the Mughals in a war against Yaqub. He did not find it easy to rule. The vanquished Kashmir nobles made a last bid to regain power, attacked the Mughals at Cherwani, a village in Badgam tehsil, and entered Srinagar under the leadership of the defeated ruler, Yaqub Shah Chak, who was again declared as King. But this success proved short-lived; for when the Mughals received reinforcements from Delhi the fifty-one days rebellion was put down and the insurgents severely punished. Yaqub Khan fled to Kishtwar where he got refuge under the raja who was his father-in-law.

In May, 1589 A.C., Akbar himself visited Kashmir and took personal interest in the affairs of the newly annexed State. He issued instructions that the Imperial Army should be confined to a place distant from the city and strictly forbade soldiers to molest the people. On the representation of the local leaders the Emperor gave orders to institute an inquiry into the method by which revenue and other taxes were gathered. Consequently all undue imposts were relaxed and the revenue system in the Valley was brought in line with the rest of the Mughal Empire.

To relieve the poverty-stricken people of their woeful economic conditions, Akbar built the Nagar Nagar around the slopes of Hari Parbat. The work was completed at a cost of one crore and ten lakhs and provided work to the thousands of unemployed in the Valley. The Emperor visited the Hindu *Tirthas* (shrines), gave gifts of gold to Brahmins and at Martanda temple made presents of cows adorned with pearls to the *purohits* of the sacred tank.

Akbar revisited the Valley twice in 1552 A.C. and in 1597 A.C. Every time that he came, he did his best to redress the grievances of the people. It was in his time that the high road to Kashmir from Gujrat in the Punjab via Bhimbar, Rajuari and Shopian to Srinagar was re-aligned and constructed by Mohammed Qasim, the Emperor's Chief Engineer. Probably owing to its age-old connection with Gandhara, Akbar included Kabul and Qandhar in the Kashmir Province.

During the time of the Chaks, Kashmir had lost all the adjoining territories that Shah Miris, particularly Shahab-ud-Din, the Great Conqueror, had subdued. The Mughals invaded Tibet and defeated its ruler Aju Rai who was made to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Delhi Government.

Towards the end of Akbar's rule a devastating famine decimated the population of the Valley. It was so serious that poor peasants actually sold their children for a mess of pottage. The Emperor promptly sent grains from Sialkot and Lahore to relieve the distress of the famishing masses.

When the romantic and pleasure-loving Jahangir came to the Mughal throne, Kashmir became the favourite province of the Empire. Jahangir was a lover of nature and it was not surprising that the scenic beauties of the Valley appealed to his mind particularly. He visited Kashmir along with his beloved spouse, Nur Jahan, almost every year. He used to say that if he lost whole of his empire but Kashmir remained with him he would not mind. This lover of the beautiful land died near Bahramgulla while on his way to the Valley.

Some of the Mughal Governors had misbehaved themselves when Jahangir ascended the throne. Qulich Khan and Sadat

Khan suppressed not only the deposed Chaks but also independence-loving nobles of Kashmir with ruthlessness. They humiliated many leaders of the country especially Hindus who cherished patriotic views. Another governor, Itiqad Khan, did not feel content with this. He imposed severe, unjust restrictions and unwarranted imposts on the toiling classes particularly the agriculturists. He requisitioned fruit gardens and reserved forests and villages for the governmental use. He attached all the land growing saffron at Pampur for imperial purposes and impressed forced labour to pluck and gather the flowers. No wages were paid for this work except a little salt. He introduced another practice of levying four *dams* on each *khirwar* of rice. He levied a poll-tax of seventy-five *dams* on each boatman old or young. A village whose rental was more than 400 *khirwars* of *shali*, was made to pay two sheep to the authorities. Itiqad Khan took sixty-six *dams* in place of each sheep. During the fruit season, the governors used to place their own men in the fruit gardens and take away the best part of the produce for themselves with the result that many Kashmiris destroy ed their gardens to avoid the depredations of the greedy *subedars*.

The Hindus of Kashmir complained to Jahangir against Qulich Khan who promptly sent a note to the Governor tersely but firmly telling him : "Complainants against you are many thanks-givers few: you should either pour cloud-water on the thirsty people or relinquish the high post of governance." Needless to say that Qulich Khan was finally discharged and turned out of Kashmir

Jahangir also revoked some if not all the imposts that had been unjustly levied by the unpopular governors. In 1621 A.C. the Emperor abolished the vexatious tax known as the Rasum-i-Faujdari. Jahangir interested himself in the social problems of the State people. In 1619 A.C., he prohibited the strangulation of daughters at birth which evil practice was in vogue among some classes of Hindus as well as Muslims. The same year he forbade the immolation of Muslim women in Rajauri who, like Hindu widows, consigned themselves to flames along with the remains of their husbands. Jahangir appointed a

Kashmiri Pandit, Sri Kanth, as a judge for the Hindus in order that, in every case of personal law, they may enjoy perfect liberty and be adjudged according to the provisions of their own religion and *Shastras.*

During the reign of Jahangir, Kishtwar which had declared its independence with the decline of Chak rule was re-conquered and annexed.

In 1617 A.C. plague broke out in the Valley in a virulent form when people died like flies. "Things had come to such a pass that from fear of death, fathers would not approach their children and children would not go near their fathers", wrote Jahangir in his *Memoirs.* "A strange thing was that in the ward, in which the disease began, a fire broke out and nearly 3,000 houses were burnt."

But despite this calamity and the harshness of certain governors, Kashmir enjoyed rest and happiness under Jahangir which it had not witnessed for more than a century. It is estimated that the Valley contributed no less than 7,46,70,000 *dams* as revenue to the State coffers, which indicates the period of prosperity through which the country passed.

Shah Jahan visited Kashmir six times during the period of his rule. His first visit took place in 1634 A.C. and the last in 1651 A.C. He deputed nine governors in all, one of whom was Prince Murad who ruled for a year in 1640 A.C. Zaffar Khan was the most efficient, benevolent and kind-hearted of all these governors. He subjugated Baltistan where the defeated but still rebellious Chaks had taken asylum. "Zaffar is chiefly remembered for the removal of hardships which Itiqad Khan had imposed upon the people of Kashmir and which were beautifully brought to the notice of Shah Jahan by a Kashmiri poet in a striking poem in honour of the Emperor's birth-day," writes Sufi, "The poet in the first couplet addressed the Emperor saying that we have a plaint in your majest'y court. In the second couplet the poet says that saffron causes the sad and the sorry to laugh but here innocent people are made to weep on account of saffron."[1] Shah Jahan issued commands

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Pp. 268-69.

revoking all the unjust taxes which were the cause of distress and misery of the subjects and inhabitants of these regions. The *firman* contained the details of these imposts and as it was intended by the Emperor "that noble governors and competent collectors and the officials of this and future times in the Province of Kashmir should consider these orders as lasting and eternal" the commands were engraved on a stone and put into the masonry of the gate of the Jama Masjid in Srinagar where it lies to this day. Zaffar Khan became so popular with the people of Kashmir that he was deputed three times to administer the province. He came first in 1631 A.C. as the lieutenant of his father, Mirza Abdul Hassan, when he proved his worth. Subsequently he ruled as governor in his own right from 1632-39 A.C.

Another popular governor was Ali Mardan Khan who became famous for his generosity and was credited with the possession of the philosopher's stone.

Shah Jahan's dealings with the Kashmir people, as with those of the other parts of his vast kingdom, were like that of a father than that of an Emperor. When a big famine broke out in the Valley, Shah Jahan exported corn from Lahore, Jallundhur and other cities of the Punjab and distributed the same free of price among the poorer classes. At the time of Shah Jahan's death, the Valley was so contented and prosperous that a *Khirwar* of paddy was selling for a few annas or in exchange for a fowl.

Aurangzeb visited the Valley only once in 1634 A.C. and that too to recoup his health which had received a set-back owing to serious illness. He was accompanied by his beloved daughter Roshan Ara. This Emperor deputed fourteen governors of whom Ibrahim Khan was appointed thrice and Saif Khan twice to administer the country. All the governors generally reflected in their actions the policy of the Emperor which was marked by intolerance, bigotry and short-sightedness. Two of them, Muzzafar Khan and Abu Nasar Khan, were particularly harsh and ruthless. The former was responsible for levying new taxes and the latter for encouraging factions

and feuds. Both suppressed and oppressed the people especially the Hindus.

It is interesting to note that, in 1670 A.C., Governor Saif Khan took a census of the population and it was recorded that in all 12,43,033 people lived in the Valley.

During Aurangzeb's reign two Kashmiris rose to fame and power. One of them was Khwaja Inayat Ullah who ascended rung after rung of the ladder of administrative service till finally he became the Revenue Minister of the Imperial Government under Farrukh Siyar and was also deputed as a governor of his own native land. Another Kashmiri was Mohammed Murad who was given the distinguished post of *Haft Hazari* and command over ten thousand *sowars* with the title of Rukun-ud-Daula.

The latter part of Aurangzeb's reign started disorder in the Valley. Hindus were already in a mood of rebellion. To this was added the clash among the Muslims themselves as in the days of the Chaks. "Sectarian fights between the Shias and Sunnis were not uncommon in those days", says Sufi. "Religious feelings were bitter everywhere. It was particularly so in Kashmir where Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi's successful propagation of Shiaite doctrines had proved fruitful. The minds of both Shias and Sunnis were therefore in a state of frenzy. Moreover, as fresh converts, the Shias must have been zealous, at times, fanatical. The Chaks who were Shias by faith, had lost their domination only recently. The aggrieved minds of Shias looked upon this fact both as personal and religious grievance. It is therefore not surprising that riots and disturbances between the Shias and Sunnis were not unusual."[1] In fairness to Shias it may be added to this that the treatment of this small community by many Sunni Governors under the Mughals was anything but just and equitous. While attempting to exterminate the defeated but defiant Chaks the Mughal Governors oppressed and suppressed the entire Shia sect.

With the decline of the Mughal rule at the death of

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 277.

Aurangzeb, Kashmir entered a period of unrest. The governors ruled while sitting at Delhi through their representatives. The Central Government having weakened and the Emperors having become play-things in the hands of power politicians, the governors of provinces virtually ruled independently and irresponsibly; everyone was intent upon making hay while the sun was shining. Poor people of Kashmir had to suffer immensely and they were driven again and again to rise in revolt against the tyrants, adventurers, looters and fanatics who came as either governors or their *naibs* (representatives).

"In Mohammed Shah's reign the history of Kashmir presents little else but a record of local riots and internecine struggles", says Sufi. A significant event occured in 1620 A.C. when the victimised Pandits and Shias joined hands to fight against the tyranny of the rulers who were carrying on the policy of cruel and ruthless persecution in the name of religion. Mahbub Khan, a Mulla, had become Sheikh-ul-Islam of Kashmir in the time of Shah Alam Bahadur. He was a landlord. A Pandit clerk, in discharge of his official duty, demanded some dues or illegal gratification from the agents of the Mulla which incensed him. Forthwith Mahbub Khan issued a *fatwa* instructing Muslims to boycott the entire Pandit community. He also forbade Pandits to wear turban on their heads, to ride, to put *tilak* (vermillion mark on the forehead), to have *choti* or to perform *puja*. This proved to be a signal for revolt. The policy of oppression by the authorities had already prepared the ground. The Pandits and the Shias cooperated and raised the banner of rebellion. Riots ensued. The Mulla was murdered by a faction of the Shias. His younger sons were also put to death.[1] Mir Ahmed Khan, the *naib* of Governor Inayat Ullah Khan, failed to control the situation; so did another *naib* Abdullah Khan. The third *naib* Mumin Khan also met with no better fate; so widespread were the disorder and the insurrection. Mulla Sharaf-ud-Din, son of the assassinated Mahbub Khan, roused the fanaticism of the bigoted sections of the Sunni Muslims to the highest pitch and much innocent blood

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 291.

of Pandits and Shias was shed in the turmoil. The cultured and freedom-loving sections of all the communities including the Sunnis detested the nefarious activities of the Mulla and his gang. Finally the Delhi Government was forced to depute Samad Khan, Viceroy of Lahore, to quell the disturbances. He reached Srinagar and summarily put Mulla Sharaf-ud-Din to death and hanged fifty of his accomplices. He also removed all restrictions that the Sheikh-ul-Islam had imposed on the religious and the political freedom of the Pandit and the Shia communities. Samad Khan's even-handed justice was celebrated and sung by the people of Kashmir in the verse:

'Haqqa av Samud phutran zin
Na rud kunih Sharuf na rud kunih Din.'

which means that Samad Khan came with such terrific rush breaking hooliganism that there remained neither Sharaf-ud-Din nor fanaticism anywhere.

But Samad Khan's benevolent despotism and statesmanship did not stop the rot that had set in mainly due to the fast declining Mughal rule. The *subedars* who followed savagely oppressed the people by wanton acts of cruelty. One Aghur Khan made himself so hateful and despicable that the people chased him and turned him out of Srinagar. He was immediately dismissed. When Nadir Shah sacked Delhi and shook the Mughal Government to its foundations in 1739 A.C. Kashmir began to waver in its loyalty. The Governor Fakhr-ud-Daula ruled for forty days in the name of Nadir Shah but had subsequently to serve as the *naib* of Inayat Ullah Khan who was appointed as *subedar* by the Mughal Emperor.

The more Mughals were involved in dissensions and internal strife, the more deteriorated became the conditions in the Valley. Ultimately anarchy ensued and there was practically no Government in the country. In their desperation two nobles of Kashmir, Mir Muqim and Zahir Didamari, approached Ahmad Shah Durrani in the time-honoured manner and craved his help to establish an organised government in Kashmir. Ahmad Shah had already secured the Punjab from the Mughals in 1751 A.C. and was at the time making prepa-

rations for another invasion on Hindustan. There was no need to persuade him to conquer Kashmir. He forthwith dispatched a big army which met the forces of the nominal Mughal Nazim at Gund Niamat near Shopian. A crushing defeat was inflicted upon Abdul Qasim, the Nazim, who tried to escape but was taken prisoner. Thus passed the beautiful valley of Kashmir into the hands of the Afghans in 1752 A.C.

An era of the Kashmir History ends with the down-fall of the Mughal rule in the Valley. Before we pass on to trace the Freedom Movement of Kashmiris under the Afghans it is proper that we should review their cultural progress during the medieval times.

CHAPTER FOUR

CULTURAL RESURGENCE UNDER MUSLIMS

AS already stated, Muslims did not come to the Valley as foreign conquerors as they did in the rest of India. It was by a strange and fortuitous combination of circumstances that Shah Mir ascended the throne in 1339 A.C. He had served for more than twenty-six years under the last Hindu rulers as an official and rendered various public services from time to time. It was the period of history when the Hindu society was disintegrating, its polity had reached a dead end and the old traditions were rapidly declining. Had Shah Mir and his descendants confined themselves to the capture of political power, it is probable they would have suffered the same fate as the Hindu rulers of the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. But wisely did the Muslim kings take keen interest in the revival of the cultural life of the people and not only proved instrumental in the preservation of the positive achievements of Hinduism in the Valley but also enriched and broadened the cultural heritage of the country by introducing the liberating and revolutionary principles on which the social philosophy of Islam stands. It was this sagacious policy which restored peace, progress and prosperity and firmly established the Muslim rule in the Valley which lasted nearly 500 years.

We know that Rinchen was converted to Islam by Sayyid Bilal, popularly known as Bulbul Shah, and he was the first Muslim ruler of the Valley who ascended the throne in 1319 A.C. with the title of Sultan Saddar-ud-Din. But at his death, Islam suffered a reverse in the Valley when Kota Rani invited Udyanadeva and installed him as the king. The revival of Hindu rule, however, proved short-lived and in 1339 A.C., with the defeat of Kota Rani at Anderkot, it came to an end.

Meanwhile, Bulbul Shah had died in 1327 A.C. But when with the capture of power by Shah Mir, news of the establish-

ment of Muslim rule went abroad, zealous missionaries of Islam began to pour into the Valley by hundreds. Among them were two brothers Sayyid Taj-ud-Din and Sayyid Hussain Simnani who were sent by Sayyid Mir Ali Hamadani "probably to survey the field for the propagation of Islam", but certainly also "to find means of escape from Timur, who was suspected of contemplating, from political motives, the massacre of this powerful Sayyid family".[1] Shah Hamadan himself visited the Valley for the first time in 1372 A.C. and on second occasion in 1377 A.C. He was accompanied by seven hundred Sayyids.

With the influx of such a large number of preachers and propagandists of the new faith, there ensued an ideological, intellectual and spiritual warfare in the Valley that could be compared only with a similar clash of ideas during the period when Buddhism was introduced in the country during the benignant rule of Asoka. The Sayyids were expounding principles, tenets, dogmas and philosophy of life that were in crass contradiction to the views held by the orthodox and conservative sections among the Hindus. It was a challenge to the caste-ridden Brahmins who, as during the period of the spread of Buddhism, fiercely resisted the then new faith and tried to put back the hands of the clock of progress.

But the protest of the reactionary Brahmins was a cry in the wilderness; it was destined to fail. For Shaivism had already prepared the ground for the seed of Islam to grow in the Valley. The followers of the *Trika* philosophy, the large majority of the Hindu community, did not find anything harmful or malignant in the teachings of Islam. Indeed its absolute monotheism appealed to the Shaiva philosophers who enthusiastically welcomed it. Only they were careful to see that the positive achievements of the age-old cultural struggle of the people of Kashmir were not destroyed by the adoption of the New Faith in any way.

The stiff and strong opposition to Islam of the anti-progressive Brahmins on the one hand and its critical appreciation by the Shaivite philosophers on the other finally resulted in the

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[1] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 84.

emergence of a new dynamic composite culture in Kashmir which may be called idealistic, sentimental or religious Humanism. It is eclectic in its essence and contains the noble truths and glorious cultural gains of both Shaivism and Islam which they have achieved in the course of their long histories.

The first votary and apostle of Religious Humanism in Kashmir was the hermitess Lalla. She was born in 1335 A.C. at Pandrethan in a Pandit family. From early in life, she refused to conform to the established traditions, dogmas and rituals of Brahminism. In utter disregard of her intensely spiritual behaviour, she was married into an orthodox Brahmin household with the result that she had to pass a period of torture and tyranny at the hands of her mother-in-law and her husband. Finally after much suffering she abandoned her home and roamed about from place to place in rags, singing and dancing in a half-nude condition. In these wanderings, she came under the influence of a Shaivite, Sidh Bayu, who gave her lessons on the *Trika* philosophy and the ancient culture of the Valley.

When Shah Hamadan arrived in Kashmir, Lalla met him and had prolonged discussions with him on philosophy, religion and spiritualism. This proved to be a turning point in her life. Having assimilated the basic teachings of both Shaivism and Islam, Lalla became the harbinger of the resurgence movement in Kashmir. Both the Hindus and the Muslims acclaimed her as their spiritual preceptor, as their friend, philosopher and guide and as the prophet of the new Kashmir which was rising from the ashes of the old. While the Hindus reverentially call her Laleshwari, or Lalla Yogeshwari, the Muslims affectionately remember her by the name of Lalla Maji.[1] She is, however, commonly known throughout the Valley and even beyond by the beloved appellation of Lal Ded (Mother Lalla).

Lalla lived till a ripe old age and while Hindus believe that she evaporated in the thin air and became one with the Universal Self according to the Shaivite Faith, the Muslims point to a grave near the Jama Masjid at Bijbihara where they believe she was buried in accordance with the Islamic rites.

Like Buddha, Lal Ded preached her doctrines in the langu-

age of the masses and not in the refined, polished and high-flown Sanskrit, the language of the scholars and the upper classes. Her sayings known as *Lallavaka* are in ancient Kashmiri and the parts that were preserved have been translated into English, Sanskrit and some other languages by eminent scholars. Self-denial, purity of life, renunciation and non-attachment are the key note of Lalla's teachings. It is only when a man has brought his senses under control and secured freedom from desire, lust and pride that he can attain supreme bliss ; says she :

'All impurities within me I burnt away,
And I did slay my heart,
I came to be known as the pious Lalla,
Only when I cleaved into him there ;
Only when I sat, just there, waiting for His grace.'

In the absence of any mental discipline no spiritual progress is possible :

'Some have abandoned home
Some the forest abode
What use a hermitage if thou controllest not thy minds.'

Adherence to formalities of religion and conformity with the traditions of the society cannot bring inner peace :

'Think not of the things that are without ;
Fix upon thy inner self thy thought :
So shalt thou be freed from let or doubt ;
Precepts these that my Preceptor taught.
Dance, then, Lalla, clothed but by the air ;
Sing, then, Lalla, clad but in the sky ;
Air and sky : what garment is more fair ;
'Cloth' saith custom. Doth that sanctify ?

Lal Ded taught that only by losing all consciousness of limited individuality and becoming absorbed in the limitless pure consciousness one could attain Nirvana, the eternal bliss :

'The holy books disappearing, the mystic formula remains,
The mystic formula vanishing, Mind alone is left :
The void (the apparent) merges into the void (the Transcendent)'.

These sayings, as the reader will easily observe, were in line with the *Trika* philosophy. But Lalla did not end here. She unreservedly denounced dogmas, rituals, narrow-minded reaction and debasing distinction of caste. She took the positive stand that equality, human brotherhood, love and sincerity were

the core of religion. She acknowledged the essential oneness in the basic philosophies of all creeds and religions. She was willing to adopt any one of the divinities which helped her to attain the final goal of complete freedom. "Whether it be Shiva (of Shaivites) or Keshave (of Brahmins) or Kamala-Janatha (Brahma) or Jina (the deity of the Buddhists or the Jains)", Lalla used to say, "by whatever name a worshipper may call the Supreme, He is still the supreme and He alone can release." She sang :

> 'Idol is of stone, temple is of stones ;
> Above (temple) and below (idol) are one :
> Which of them will thou worship, 0, foolish Pandit ?
> Cause thou the union of mind and soul.'

Lalla was a Muslim Sufi as well as a Hindu Shaivite ; she said :

> 'The same stone is in the road and in the pedestal :
> The same stone is the sacred place ;
> The same stone is the turning mill ;
> Shiva is difficult to be attained, take a hint of guidance (from thy Guru)'.

The influence of Sufism on her is clear from many of her sayings. "He who has love and confidence on the word of the Guru, he who controls the horse of mind by the bridle of knowledge, he who enjoys peace having subdued his senses, then who will die and whom will they kill ?" Lalla was fully conscious of her historic role as the prophet of resurgence in Kashmir. She knew that the dynamic philosophy she was preaching and the composite culture that she was founding were bound to open an era of human brotherhood in Kashmir in which the differences of caste and creed, birth and position would be meaningless : She declared :

> 'The time is coming when seven generations will sink to hell,
> When ultimately showers of rain and dust will fall,
> When plates of flesh and wine cups,
> Brahmins and sweepers will take together.'

Lalla believed in moderation and was an advocate of the Middle Path. "By overeating you will not achieve anything and by not eating at all you will become conceited by considering yourself an ascetic", she said."Eat therefore moderately O darling! and you will remain balanced. By eating moderately all the doors (of success) will be unbolted for you." In the search of

truth and the ultimate goal of freedom Lalla's philosophy knew no failure. To work, to strive in spite of the repeated set-backs and finally to attain the objective was what she taught :

> 'Searching and seeking Him, I, Lalla wearied myself
> And beyond my strength I strove
> Then, looking for Him, I found His doors closed and latched.
> This deepened my longing and stiffened my resolve ;
> And I would not move but stood where I was,
> Full of longing and love, I gazed on Him.'

And what happened thereafter :

> "Passionate, with longing in my eyes, searching wide and seeking night and day,
> Lo ! I beheld the Truthful one, the Wise,
> Here in mine own House to fill my gaze.
> That was the day of my lucky star,
> Breathless, I hold him my Guide to be.

Man is the master of himself, the forger of his own destiny, the builder of his own future. He need not seek the help of any unseen powers beyond himself. Let him have faith in himself to achieve freedom. This in nutshell was the message of Humanism that emerged from the fusion of the two religious philosophies of Shaivism and Islam and of which Lal Ded was the first apostle as well as the Prophet. Lalla not only preached the new cult during the course of her wanderings throughout the length and breadth of the Valley, she also practised it in her own life.

Obviously there is contradiction in the teachings of Lalla. Her philosophy merges the individual with a spiritual collectivity. She taught mysticism and collectivism. At the same time she asked man to have faith in himself and seek no assistance from outside. But Lalla could not help it as such contradictions are inherent in all idealistic philosophies.

Like all the great prophets and benefactors of humanity, Lalla was considered mad and crazy in the beginning. The worldly wise people ridiculed her and even teased her but ultimately she triumphed and became the most popular figure in her homeland. She died nearly six hundred years ago but people of Kashmir, both intellectuals and the illiterate rural masses, even to this day sing the songs of Lal Ded.

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While Lalla was still alive, another Master of the Resurgence Movement, Sheikh Noor-ud-Din, was born in 1377 A.C. in the village of Kaimuh. His great grand father was a Hindu Raja of Kishtwar, who had been killed in a civil strife. Consequently the family ran away from their native place and took shelter in the Valley. The father of Noor-ud-Din, Sheikh Salar-ud-Din, came in contact with Sayyid Hussain Simnani and was converted to Islam.

There is a legend that at the time of his birth, Noor-ud-Din refused to suck the breasts of his mother Sudra and when he was brought into the presence of Lalla, she rebuked the new-born infant for his false renunciation, and he immediately began to have his natural nourishment. From very early in his life, Noor-ud-Din manifested his aversion for formalities of religion and the traditional education imparted in the schools and *muktabs* under Mullas. He loved quiet solitude and remained absorbed in deep contemplation for hours. Evidently he was in desperate search for a solution of the eternal problem of existence. He was no longer a part of the life that surrounded him. To all his relatives, friends and neighbours, his behaviour appeared strange but unmindful of all this, he continued his struggle.

While Noor-ud-Din was undergoing the terrible mental and spiritual turmoil, he sought the guidance of Lalla who initiated him into the secrets and the mysteries of the cult of Religious Humanism. It at once deeply influenced him and he attained the inner peace, calm and poise for which he had been pining for years.

Sheikh Noor-ud-Din lived a perfectly saintly life and remained devoted to the noble principles of oneness of all religions and universal brotherhood of man till the end of his life. He refrained from eating flesh of any kind or onions or garlic. During the closing days of his life, he even gave up milk and honey and lived on simplest diet not infrequently comprising solely of a few cups of water. He died in 1438 A.C. at the age of sixty-one in the reign of Bud Shah. The Sultan paid him the highest tribute by accompanying his bier and by leading

the prayers himself for the everlasting peace and liberation of the Sheikh's soul. He was buried at the village Chrar which he had made as his headquarters during the major part of his life. Sheikh Nur-ud-Din was popular with all sects, classes and communities of people in the Valley. The Hindus believe that he was nominally a Mussalman and in reality a Sanyasi of a high order They called him Sahazanand and had preserved his sayings in Kashmiri *Sharda* Script in the book entitled *Rishi Nama.* It was nearly two hundred years after the death of the saint that one of his followers, Baba Nasib-ud-Din Ghazi, wrote a biography of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din in Persian and rendered the sayings into the Persian Script which is known as *Noor Nama.*

The common people of the Valley remember the saint by the affectionate name of Nünd Rishi and adore him equally with, and as high as, Lal Ded. He is by common consent accepted as the patron saint of the Valley. Thousands of people visit the sacred shrine of Nund Rishi at Chrar Shariff every year on the day of his death anniversary and pay their heart-felt homage to his greatness and glory. Three hundred and seventy years after the death of Nund Rishi in 1808 A.C., Ata Mohammed Khan, the Afghan Governor, when he raised the banner of revolt against the Kabul Government, struck coins in silver in the name of the saint on which were inscribed the words in Persian which rendered into English mean 'O Shah Nur-ud-Din' 'O Lord of the world,' on one side and 'The world is carrion and the seekers after it are dogs' on the other. "Thus Afghan Governor Ata Mohammed Khan gave, as it were, expression to public sentiment when coins were struck by him in the name of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din in 1808-10 A.C.", observes Sufi. "No other saint perhaps in human history has ever had coins struck in his honour".[1]

The basis of Nund Rishi's philosophy of life is love and intense devotion to God. He says:

"The love is he who burns with love
Whose self doth shine like gold

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 101.

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When man's heart lights up with the flame of love
Then shall he reach the Infinite."

Again:

"Love is death of an only son to a mother
Can the lover have any sleep?
Love is venomous stings of a swarm of wasps
Can the lover have any rest?
Love is a rope dripping with blood
Can the wearer even utter a sigh?"

Like Lalla, Nund Rishi advises a seeker after truth not to be discouraged by adversity but carry on the struggle for the attainment of the objective of liberty:

"Shield not thy self against His arrows;
Turn not thy face away from His sword.
Consider adversity as sweet as sugar;
Therein lies thy honour in this world and the next."

Numerous legends and anecdotes have been associated with the life and doings of Nund Rishi which are as fresh today as ever in the memory of the people. To expose the hollowness of the cherished values of the society, the saint once went to attend a banquet, to which he had been invited, in rags. Because of his wretched appearance he could not get admittance into the assembly of the guests. He returned to his house and came back richly dressed. When the feast was served, he put his sleeves and the corners of his costly *choga* into the dishes. The guests were astonished at his strange behaviour and asked him the reason. He replied with a smile, "the feast is not really for Noor-ud-Din but for the costly and long sleeves." The host and all others were put to shame. The lesson of recognising merit in a man irrespective of his dress was brought home to every one present.

Sheikh Noor-ud-Din had a large number of followers at the time of his death. Of his chief disciples Baba Nasir-ud-Din was his favourite and all the saint's verses and sayings are addressed to him by the affectionate name of "Nasru". Reviewing his own life, Nund Rishi is reported to have told Baba Nasir-ud-Din:

"The body exposed to the cold river winds blowing,
Thin porridge and half-boiled vegetables to eat—
There was a day, O Nasru,

My spouse by my side and a warm blanket to cover us
A sumptuous meal and a fish to eat
There was a day, O Nasru."

Soon after the death of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din his chief disciples founded a religious order known as Rishis or Babas in the Valley. While the Sayyids and other Muslim missionaries from Turkistan and Iran were engaged in preaching the doctrines of Quran in their orthodox form, the Rishis were absorbed in popularising the creed of Religious Humanism under the veneer of Islam. "These Muslim mystics, well-known as Rishis or Babas or hermits, considerably furthered the spread of Islam by their extreme piety and utter self-abnegation which influenced the people to a change of creed "[1] As the years rolled by the order of the Rishis grew in importance and exerted considerable influence on the social and cultural life of the people of the Valley. The Rishis did not enjoy any governmental support as certainly other Muslim missionaries did, but sheerly by their exemplary conduct, they led the masses to a higher and a nobler spiritual life. In his *Memoirs*, Jehangir wrote about the Rishis that "though they have no religious knowledge or learning of any sort, yet they possess simplicity and are without pretence. They abuse no one. They restrain the tongue of desire and the foot of seeking. They eat no flesh, they have no wives, and always plant fruit-bearing trees in fields so that men may benefit by them, themselves desiring no advantage. There are about 2,000 of these."

The peaceful and rapid conversion of the large masses of the people in Kashmir to Islam, which has been the source of wonder and astonishment for many students of history and religion, was facilitated and made possible by the spread of the cult of Religious Humanism taught by Lal Ded, Nund Rishi and their followers. Islam as practised in the Valley, though it surely stands on the basis of the cardinal principles taught by the Quran, has been deeply influenced by the ancient Kashmir culture as it was influenced by the pre-Islamic Persian

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 96.

culture after the followers of Zarathushtra accepted it in Iran. Even after their conversion to New Faith the people of the Valley have not altogether given up the ways of life and mental outlook that their forefathers had adopted after making innumerable experiments with diverse philosophies through thousands of years of their history. A Kashmiri Muslim shares in common with his Hindu compatriots many inhibitions, supersititions, idolatrous practices as well as social liberties and intellectual freedoms which are unknown to Islam. Of course Islam in its turn has also not left Hinduism unaffected in the Valley. Side by side with the work of the Rishis for the moral and spiritual upliftment of the Muslim masses, a movement of Reformation has been going on among the Hindus of Kashmir Great seers like Rupa Bhawani, Pandit Nand Ram alias Parmanand and others have flourished from time to time, who have expounded the message that Lal Ded gave. It is beyond the scope of the present work to discuss in detail the consequences of the impact of Islam on the civilisation and culture of Kashmir. But it might be noted that during the five centuries of Muslim rule, Hinduism in Kashmir underwent such transformation that it changed its complexion beyond recognition.

The conflict between reactionary Brahminism and orthodox Islam on the one side and the doubts of the progressive but critical Shaivites on the other, having been resolved by the evolution of Religious Humanism, the disintegration, anarchy and restlessness came to an end and Kashmir entered a new era of progress. The philosophy of life taught by Lal Ded and Nund Rishi was the basis on which the social and political life was reared during the medieval times in the Valley. The cardinal principles of this philosophy are attainment of complete freedom through discipline and self control, full faith in God, tolerance for other peoples' views, respect for all religions, right of every man and woman to live full natural life and affording refuge to the persecuted. This has been the precious heritage of all classes and communities of people in the Valley whether formally they adhere to Islam, Hinduism,

Buddhism or any other religion. Any activities which cut at the root of this culture have appeared abhorrent and intolerable to them. Whenever attempts have been made by any ruler of Kashmir or any minister, whether Muslim or non-Muslim to suppress freedom of thought or to persecute any sect or class of people in the name of religion, Kashmiris have made a common cause and revolted against it. The history of Freedom Movement in the Valley is mainly the record of the fight of Kashmiris for the defence and preservation of this culture against the onslaughts of tyrants and despots who have appeared from time to time.

But the wise Muslim Kings became the standard-bearers of the Religious Humanism. They translated the basic principles of this philosophy into their actions while dealing with different sections of the people. "King Qutub-ud-Din saw that the people died of famine every year and he performed *Yajna* in the month of Bhadra and distributed large gifts." Bud Shah was a frequent visitor to the different Hindu *tirthas* throughout the Valley. Many interesting details of these pilgrimages have been recorded by the contemporary historians."The king heard of the advantages of going on pilgrimage to *Naubandhna* hill from *Adipurana* and felt a desire to undertake a journey to the shrine", writes Srivara. "The king was bent on going to the pilgrimage and he went to Vijayeshwara in the year thirty-nine on the last day of the fortnight fixed for giving offerings to deceased ancestors......The king accompanied by his two sons left Vijayesha and reached Durmarga on foot in three days. Wearing a noble appearance in his piety, he saw Vishnu's foot mark at the Krama lake and felt the joy of bowing at the feet of Vishnu...... From me he heard the songs of *Gita Govinda*...... When journeying to the Sukumara lake, the king drank of the water of that lake and meditated on the Sukumara shrine, and he felt a delight as if he had obtained the purity of his soul. The king heard the names of the holy places, touched the auspicious waters from the shrines, tasted the cool water, saw the beauty of the forest trees, and scented the perfumes of plants

and flowers, and thus performed the pilgrimage that gives pleasure to the five senses, and then returned to his capital".[1]

Under the influence of the cult of composite nationalism some of the festivals which had their origin in Hindu mythology had assumed a secular complexion and both Hindus and Muslims celebrated them. Bud Shah used to function as the high priest on such occasions. One such festival was the birthday of Vitasta. "On the thirteenth day of the moon the king wished to see the display of lamps made on the occasion of the worship held on account of the birth of Vitasta," writes Srivara, "and he embarked on a boat and went to the capital. While on the water he listened to well-composed songs, and at the time of embarking and disembarking he accepted the blessings of the citizens. The display of lamps offered by the citizens to the river looked graceful as if the spirits of numberless holy places had come to the Vitasta for adoration. The rows of lamps placed at the ferry on both banks looked beautiful, as if the gods had scattered golden flowers for the worship of the Vitasta. The moon was reflected on the river, but trembled on the water as if overcome by the superior beauty, and humbled by the lovely faces of the citizens' wives who came to make offerings to the Vitasta and to worship. The king who had curbed the pride of his enemies spent the whole night in the pleasure of listening to songs".[2]

Another such national festival was *Sont* (Basant) celebrated in the month of Chaitra (March-April). "At the Chaitra Festival, the king embarked on a boat, accompanied by his son and with a view to enjoy the sport of flowers he went to Madavarajya. The line of the King's boats on the Vitasta looked like the row of Indra's chariots on the milky way. He started from Avantipura, and stopped at royal palaces at Vijayesha and other places in order to witness dancing".[3] Describing the celebration of the same festival dur-

[1] *Kings of Kashmira,* Vol. III, Pp. 146-47.

[2] Ibid, Page 124.

[3] Ibid, Pp. 132-33.

ing the days of Chaks, the historian Shuka says: "When all the people had met at Sharikasthana and the king had arrived at the hill at that place, he held a great festival on the day appointed to celebrate the Season of Spring. The people besmeared themselves with saffron, aloes, camphor and sandal-wood paste on that day and looked beautiful. The king fixed a spot so high that it could not be easily seen, and then he gave elephant, horse and wealth to his servant who succeeded in shooting it".[1]

If the Chaitra festival was celebrated on the Hari Parbat hill, Kashmiris collected and enjoyed life on the hill of Jeshtharudra (now accupied by the royal palaces at Gupkar) on *Sri Panchmi* day. This is what eye witness Shuka says about it: "Again on the day of Sri Panchmi the king saw the people collect on hill of Jeshtharudra. Some held bouquets tastefully made of beautiful flowers to their noses, some were intoxicated and became uneasy when women, strangers to them, smiled; some drank wine and adorned their persons with flowers; thus all the people amused themselves on the Sri Panchmi day and then dispersed themselves. Many a time the king witnessed the dances of beautiful women, and looked at their youthful beauties and heard their songs, and gave them clothes of gold and of silver and then embarked on a new boat".[2]

It was by such acts of wise statesmanship and liberal-mindedness that the far-sighted Muslim monarchs stabilised their rule in the Valley. It restored order and peace and opened the way for progress and prosperity of the country.

The Muslim kings did not materially change the political structure of Kashmir. The administration remained as before in the hands of the traditional official class, the Brahmins, for whom the change in religion therefore offered very few prospects of advancement. Sanskrit continued to be, for a long time, the official and court language. Not only was this language used in writing official documents, reports and records, it continued to serve as the medium of communication for all

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 393.

[2] Ibid, Page 393.

classes of people. The Muslims even engraved inscriptions on their tombstones in Sanskrit and many old graves with inscriptions in *Sharda* script have been found in Srinagar, at Mattan and elsewhere.

But gradually the Sultans introduced the essential points of Islamic Law in the administration. They were however wise enough not to bring in anything which was repugnant to the basic principles of the indigenous culture. In the matter of personal laws, Hindus and Muslims were granted complete autonomy. When any Sultan, like Sikandar, attempted to foist the *Shariat* law on the people including the Hindus, the consequences were disastrous and the stability of the government was rudely shaken. Fortunately, however, such bigots were few and far between.

During the medieval times, Kashmir continued to be ruled by autocratic methods. The king was absolute and all laws and justice issued from his person. But the public opinion as represented by the nobles, the wealthy classes and the intellectuals exercised the age-old check on the behaviour of the rulers. The masses appeared nowhere in the picture excepting when they were used as cannon fodder by the ambitious nobles struggling for power.

Land was the main source of production as well as income to the State. The Valley was divided for the purposes of administration and revenue into a considerable number of smaller units known as *Vishaya* under Hindu rule and *Pargana* during the Muslim period. Sultan Shams-ud-Din fixed the revenue at one-sixth of the produce in 1341 A.C. and levied a tax of one-sixth on all imports into Kashmir. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin Bud Shah revised the land assessment. He fixed it at one-fourth of the total produce in some places and at one-seventh at others. The enhanced rate was due to the extensive irrigation works which enormously increased the area of cultivation and made the people prosperous and rich. The paddy crop alone is said to have been no less than seventy-seven lakhs of *khirwars*. One of the main causes that contributed to the fifty-one days' rebellion at the advent of the Mughal rule

was the excessive enhancement of land revenue by the Mughal Governor. The cultivators were the chief supporters of the deposed Chak King. For that reason the first thing Akbar did after the rebellion was quelled was to institute an enquiry into the assessment of land revenue which was ordered to be fixed according to facts. In the Mughal times, saffron and hunting became the monopolies of the Government.

The Kashmir army under the Muslim monarchs was divided into infantry and cavalry. All classes of people and every district supplied the recruits. Some of the families notably the Magres and the Chaks distinguished themselves by producing efficient and capable officers for the army. The weapons in use throughout the medieval times were the sword, bow and arrow, lance, spear, javelin and the iron-bound stick. The warrior's armour included breast plates, shields, helmet, iron chests, protector for thighs,shanks,fore-arms, neck and other parts of the body. In 1446 A.C. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin imported fire-arms and an expert to teach their use to the army which revolutionised the art of warfare.

Political stability and adequate defence forces under the Muslim rulers during the medieval times enabled the people to pursue the avocations of peace and cultural activities. Thinkers and authors reappeared and flourished. Some valuable works in Sanskrit were produced. With the advent of Muslim rule Persian, the language of Islamic culture under the Abbasids, was introduced in the Valley and soon became the rival of Sanskrit and finally overshadowed it by becoming the court language under the Mughals. Not only the Muslims but Hindus as well began to study Persian and in course of time the country produced many indigenous Persian scholars and writers.

Among the important Sanskrit works of this period mention may be made of Jagadhar Bhat's *Stutikusumanjali* (1350 A.C.) a book which has been highly praised for its literary merit by competent authorities ; Sri Kantha's *Balbodhini* (1475 A.C.) Vallabhadev's *Padyavali* (1550 A.C.) and Shivopadhyay's *Vijnana Bhairava* (1775 A.C.) a brilliant book on *Shaivism.*

CULTURAL RESURGENCE UNDER MUSLIMS

Most of the Sultans were patrons of learning. Besides encouraging the study of Sanskrit they opened schools and colleges for the spread of Arabic and Persian languages. Sultan Shahab-ud-Din established the first Madrasatul-Quran, a college for the study of Quran. Sultan Qutub-ud-Din laid the foundations of a residential system of education by establishing a college in Srinagar where arrangements were made for the lodging and boarding of the teachers as well as the taught and which provided for free association of the pupils and professors. When Sultan Sikandar Butshikan built the *Jama Masjid*, he attached a college for the study of Islamic literature to it. This was known as the College of *Jama Masjid.*

In the rule of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, the spirit of renaissance received the greatest impetus. The king established the *Dar-ul-Ulum* or the University near his own palace at Naushahar. It was accommodated in spacious buildings and flourished under the guidance of its eminent and learned rector Mulla Kabir Nahvi. He was assisted by a large number of scholars and men of science drawn from different parts of the world. The University was a residential one and perfect arrangements had been made for the lodging and boarding of the professors and the students. The revenue of several villages was assigned to meet the huge expenses of the University. This great and glorious institution genuinely represented the spirit of the age and the soul of the Kashmir culture. It imparted knowledge on religion, mathematics, astronomy, geography, history, medicine, art and architecture. A translation bureau was attached to the University where books from Sanskrit and Arabic were translated into Persian and Kashmiri. Mulla Ahmad, a Muslim savant, and Utta Som, a Kashmiri Pandit scholar, were in charge of the department. Zain-ul-Abidin sent his men to different parts of India, Persia and other Middle East countries to collect important books on all subjects, It is said he secured nearly twenty-five thousand volumes and with these he established a library for the University which remained in existence till the reign of Fath Shah. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin gave liberal donations and grants for learning and spent huge sums for the

maintenance of various institutions. He opened a college in Zaingir between his palace and the royal garden. Another large *madrassa* was established at Sir, a village near Mattan.

After Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, other Muslim kings notably Hassan Shah and Hussain Shah Chak, also founded *khanqahs* and *madrassas* in their times for diffusion of learning and dissemination of knowledge. Through the portals of these institutions came out renowned people, scholars, savants, authors, thinkers, philosophers and men of science who have made great contributions to religion and philosophy, art and architecture, learning and literature.

Books written in Persian as at present known and available are about 350 in number. They are on philosophy, religion, history, geography, medicine, music, painting and, of course, literature.

Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi (1512-94 A.C.) was not only considered the most learned of his contemporaries in the Valley but was known as one of the greatest scholars of his age. He has written many books including *Tafsir-Masalak-ul-Akhyar, Wamiq-u-Azra, Laila-Majnun, Maghazin-Nabi and Maqamat-i-Murshid*, besides a *Divan, Qasidas* and *Ghazals*. Sarfi was a patriot and a fighter for freedom. Mention has already been made of a deputation which went to the court of Akbar and invited the Mughal Emperor to invade Kashmir and liberate the Valley from the tyranny of the Chaks. Sarfi was a member of this deputation.

In philosophy the names of Baba Daud Khaki, Khwaja Habib Ullah Navshahri and Mirza Akmal-ud-Din Kamil lead others. The prodigious work of the last named, *Bahar-ul-Urfan*, which was written in reply to that of Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, is in four volumes and comprises 80,000 verses. But the most distinguished thinker of the medieval times who personified the spirit of Kashmir culture in Persian literature was Mulla Mohammed Mahsin Fani who wrote the important book, *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*. Sufi rightly observes that Kashmir may well be proud of a scholar of his eminence. He was born in 1615 A.C. and belonged to a family which enjoyed a reputation for

culture and learning. He was a widely travelled man and had come in close contact with distinguished philosophers and religious leaders of his age. On his return from abroad, Fani took to a life of seclusion in a monastery where he worte the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* in 1645 A.C. It consists of twelve parts dealing with the religions and views of (1) Parsis (2) Hindus including Sikhs (3) Qara Tibbatis (Buddhists) (4) Jews (5) Christians (6) Muslims (7) Sadiqis (adherents of Mussailima, a rival of Prophet Muhammed) (8) Wahidis (9) Raushanais (a religious sect founded by Mian Bayazid Ansari) (10) Illahis (followers of Din Illahi founded by Akbar) (11) Philosophers and (12) Sufis. *The Dabistan* was written by Fani in an unbiased and impartial manner appreciating the good points and critically commenting upon the unacceptable or objectionable features in all religions and philosophies of the contemporary world. He did not hesitate to express his preference and liking in certain respects for some other religions than Islam to which he belonged by birth. He declared that Din Illahi was the best of all and equally great or next to it was the religion of the Parsis, the Fire-Worshippers. The Ulemas or the Muslim divines of Kashmir denounced Fani for his heretic views and he was declared as *murtad* or an apostate. Although after his death attempts have been made to prove that subsequently Fani changed his views and died as a faithful Muslim, the fact is that he never repented for his 'sins' and was as independent, critical and sceptical in his opinions at the moment of his death as during the whole of his life. *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* has attracted the attention of many eminent scholars and students of philosophy and religion in the modern age. The book has been translated into many languages including French and English.

Another noted scholar of distinction was Khwaja Abdul Karim. By an accident, he, while on his way to Mecca, met Nadir Shah in Delhi who was struck by his intelligence and offered him employment. Subsequently he is said to have become the Shah's Foreign Minister and was once deputed as an envoy to Balakalva by the Persian King. After relinquishing his services at the Persian court, Abdul Karim travelled widely

over the Middle East and the Subcontinent of India. On his return to Kashmir he wrote a detailed description of his travels giving graphic and most interesting but accurate accounts of the places he had seen, the personages he met and the social and political conditions of the times in a book entitled *Bayan* or *Memoirs.* It is also called *Nadar Nama* or *Tarikh-i-Nadari.* This book besides being a history of Nadir Shah's rule after his sack of Delhi also serves as the chronicle of the later Mughals. Abdul Karim was a keen observer and an independent critic who wrote all that he saw in a beautiful, fascinating style.

Some biographies written in the medieval period are *Tazkara-i-Murshadin* by Khwaja Miram Bazaz (1575 A.C.) *Asrar-ul-Abrar* by Baba Daud Mushakani (1653 A.C.) and *Tazkara-i-Shaura-i-Kashmir* by Mulla Zihni (1655 A.C.).

The study of Persian language started in Kashmir immediately after the advent of Muslim rule. Slowly but firmly it struck roots in the soil of the Valley. Some of the Sultans, notably Zain-ul-Abidin, Haider Shah, Hussain Shah Chak were themselves poets and composed verses in Persian. But the best poetry was produced in the time of Mughals. Numerous poets have left their works. Among the outstanding whose names deserve mention are Ashraf, Tayib, Mazhari, Sarfi, Fani, Salim, Auji, Fitrati, Faroghi, Najmi, Guya, Taufiq, Sati, Yakta and Baha-ud-Din Mattu.

The greatest poet who composed in the Persian language during the medieval times was Mulla Mohammed Tahir Ghani, who flourished in the reign of Aurangzeb. Although his sweet and exquisite poetry could be admired only by nobles and men of upper classes, he disliked to be in their company. Never in his life did Ghani write in praise of a prince, a governor or a noble ; nor did he wait upon them. In the whole history of Persian literature, probably he is alone in not having composed a *qasida* in praise of any human being. And the great poet composed no less than 20,000 verses. Ghani was an interesting personality. Like all great thinkers he voluntarily accepted a humble life and lived in a cottage with the barest necessities of life. He left the door and windows of the house wide open

when he was away and closed and locked them when inside. To those who enquired about the strange practice he would reply that the only wealth in the cottage was Ghani.

Being informed of the noble and brilliant poetry that Ghani composed, the Mughal Emperor instructed the Governor of Kashmir to present the poet at the Delhi court. But Ghani refused to go and advised the governor to tell the Emperor that the poet had turned lunatic. Naturally the governor turned down the suggestion and the poet was afraid that he might be forced to proceed to Delhi. While still in the presence of the governor, he jumped on his feet, tore the collar of the governor's shirt and went home. After three days of this incident the poet was no more in this world.

Mohammed Tahir Ghani possessed an extraordinary imagination and a very fertile brain. He composed verses which elicited the highest praise of the poets of Iran. Persian poetry found another home in the Valley during his time.

Many Pandits also wrote poetry in Persian when that language became the language of the rulers of the country. It is said that one Hindu named Tilak who had studied in Kashmir and knew Persian flourished at the court of Mahmud of Ghazni as an interpreter. That was very early in history. In later centuries many Pandits composed verses in Persian. Mention may be made of Taba Ram Turki Betab (1840 A.C.) whose *Jung Nama* stands at par with *Shah Nama* of Firdausi; Pandit Raj Kaul Arzbegi Dairi (1887 A.C.), Munshi Bhavani Das Kachru Nikku whose original style of the *Bahar-i-Tavil* is held in high esteem and Pandit Raj Kak Dar 'Farrukh'. "What Musalman can beat Rai Khwaja Pandit Chandra Bhan Brahmin who flourished under Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb Alamgir and Dara Shukuh?", asks Sufi. Paying a tribute to the love of learning among the Pandit community the learned author of *Kashir* adds: "The Kashmir Brahmin distinguished himself in Sanskrit and won the proud title of Pandit in the early history of India. He made a name in Persian in medieval India. He is not behind others in English in modern India. He has thus won laurels in all the three allied Aryan languages of the

world at different times in the cultural development of India".[1]

During the ancient Hindu and Buddhist periods as well as the early Shah Miri Sultans, Sanskrit was the court language and medium of communication among the educated classes. Later on in the medieval times Persian took its place. But the masses neither spoke Sanskrit nor Persian. Their language was *Prakrit*, a conglomeration of the words of many languages which gradually took the shape of Kashmiri, the language of the people now. The sayings of Lal Ded and Nund Rishi became very popular among the masses of the Valley because they are all in the Kashmiri and are believed to be the oldest books in that language. Some authorities however believe that Rajanak Shiti Kanth wrote his *Mahanaya Prakash*, a book on Shaiva philosophy, even earlier in the thirteenth century. Som Bhat wrote *Zaina Charita*, a biography of King Bud Shah, in prose. Another courtier Udh Bhat brought out *Zaina Vilas*, a dramatic work dealing with an episode in the king's life.

The women of Kashmir did not enjoy that much of liberty under the Muslim rule as they had during the early period of their history. Those belonging to the middle and upper classes were mostly kept in seclusion and had to move about in veil. Yet it is interesting to note that many women took active part in public life and attained name and fame in history. We have already mentioned Lalla, the hermitess, and Rupa Bhavani who flourished about the end of the sixteenth century. Both of them were religious-minded and saintly in character. To a different type belonged Habba Khatun, a peasant girl of village Chanda Har whose original name was Zoon. She was very handsome and lived to be the queen of King Usuf Shah Chak (1579-86 A.C.). She was a musician of a high order and is famous for having invented the *Rast Kashmiri Rag*. When Usuf Shah was deposed and sent to a province outside Kashmir, her condition became miserable. She then lived like a recluse and during the days of plight and separation, she composed songs that are full of love, pathos and emotion. Another musician and singer of note be-

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. II, Page 487.

longing to the fair sex is Arni Mal, wife of the poet Bhavani Das Kachru, whose lyrics are still sung in the Kashmiri homes. Her fate appears not to be disimilar to that of Habba Khatun.

Other women of note during the medieval times were Bibi Taj Khatun, daughter of Commander-in-Chief of Sultan Shahab-ud-Din's army, a lady of saintly character ; Bibi Bahat, a disciple of Nund Rishi and renowned for her learning ; Lachhma Khatun, wife of a minister of Bud Shah, who founded a *khanqah* and a *madrassa* near the *Jama Masjid* ; Gul Khatun, the queen of Haider Shah, who favoured the customs of Hindus ; Bibi Saliha who rebuilt *Khanqah-i-Maulla* by selling her jewelry after it had been demolished by the Shias ; Hafiza Khadiji who opened a school for women and Begum Farzana, a lady of extraordinary ability, courage and charm who became Christian, married Walter Reinhardt, a British soldier, in 1773 A.C., whom the Mughal Emperor granted Sardana as a *jagir*. The last named is known to History as Begum Samru and is now a saint of the Roman Catholic Church as a reward for her pious deeds.

With the decline of the Hindu rule the architecture in Kashmir had lost much of its impressive grandeur, vitality and strength. The columns, the trefoil arch, the pillars, all degenerated into mere ornamental motifs. The dimensions of the temples and other public edifices also were reduced to ridiculous proportions so that ultimately they became small miniatures unfit for use. During the days of glory, every architectural feature of the religious buildings was designed for utility purposes. But when the Hindu rule declined, pillars and arches were converted into ornaments and decorations yielding place to sculptured reliefs, geometrical figures and floral patetrns. On the whole a gradual decline, lack of originality and tendency of repetition are obvious in the works of the Hindu architects of the 10-12th centuries.

The stabilisation of the government under the Muslim kings restored the peace in the Valley and with it not only learning of science and arts was revived but attempts were made at invention, evolution and perfection of new styles in architecture. Naturally in the beginning, Kashmiri architects and master-buil-

ders revived the old traditions and patterns which prevailed during the Hindu period. But in this they did not prove a success. "Muslim architecture in Kashmir must be pronounced as rather disappointing in comparison with the grand edifices of Hindu rule like the temples at Martand, Avantipura, Parihaspura, Pattan and Tapar etc".[1] The Muslims tried the masonry style of which two most outstanding examples are the tomb of Zain-ul-Abidin's mother, popularly known as Bud Shah's temple, and the small tomb of Sayyid Mohammed Madani, an envoy at the court of Zain-ul-Abidin, outside Sangin Darwaza in Srinagar which was built in 1444 A.C. It is a typical example of the Hindu Muslim composite culture peculiar to the Kashmir architectural style. "The tile work is very valuable—one of the most valuable antiquities which Kashmir possesses", wrote Sir John Marshall. "There are only three monuments that I know of in India where such tiles can be found".

The structure of the tomb of Bud Shah's mother was raised by Sikandar on the plinth of a five-faced Hindu temple which the *But Shikan* had demolished. It has a central dome which is surrounded by four copulas. It is wholly on the Persian model with its masonry and glazed and moulded blue bricks which are studded at intervals in the exterior walls. The plinth with its filetted torus cornice is essentially Hindu in conception and origin and so is the trefoiled entrance and its massive side pieces. There are a few carved stones still lying near the site bearing sculpture reliefs of Hindu deities.

Having failed to erect the massive structures in the traditional Hindu style, the Muslims invented a wooden style of their own. Probably they were forced to do so because of the religious needs. The temple was meant for the deity and the individual but the mosque was needed for the communal worship. It was to be spacious if not massive. Buildings of stone are cold but those of wood are warm and comfortable inside and therefore more fit for the purposes of communal worship. Wood was available in abundance throughout the

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. II, Page 505.

Valley and therefore just as the indigenous talent was intelligently applied in utilising the locally available material for building temples in the Gandhara style in the earlier periods, so the Kashmir architects now made the use of wood in erecting mosques, *khanqahs* and other edifices. This original style was evolved during the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin who was the greatest patron of art and architecture. Some of the best designers and architects were invited from abroad, who, in collaboration with the Kashmiri craftsmen and master-builders, raised magnificent structures like the mosque at Shah Hamadan, the mosque of Madyan Sahib, the *Jama Masjid*, the tomb of Sheikh Nur-ud-Din at Chrar and the Jama Masjid at Shopian. In all these buildings the saracenic influence is quite clear in their details but they are unlike the Muslim edifices of other countries. Outwardly the *Khanqah* of Shah Hamdan looks like a Buddhist Pagoda and the arches, trefoils, cloisters and blustrades in *Jama Masjid* are very similar to Hindu temples. In *Jama Masjid* "the well finished timber work of the walls with its pleasing diaper of headers and stretchers, the magnificent pillars of deodar in the larger halls, and the delicate open work traceries of window screens and blustrades, skilfully put together out of innumerable small pieces of wood, all help to enhance the charm and accentuate the stylishness of this architecture", writes Sir John Marshall. As a matter of fact this early architecture of the Muslim period testifies to the revival of strength, virility and force in the wooden style.

But the best specimens of the wooden style of architecture were the royal palaces that Zain-ul-Abidin had built. One of these was in the middle of the Volur lake. He had emptied a big quantity of stones into the lake and on those constructed an island measuring two hundred square yards. Here he erected a charming palace and planted pleasant groves of trees. In his city of Nau Shahr he built *Rajdhan* (the seat of the Government). It was also called Zaina Dab after the King's own name. The edifice was twelve storeys high some of which contained fifty rooms, halls and corridors.The whole of this lofty structure was made of wood. "It was here that the king, now that his foes

had been vanquished, enjoyed, like Indra, the pleasant songs of the singers all day long", writes Srivara, "Within the palace was the audience hall, adorned with the three cornered throne and wide spacious halls lined with glass; and here were many columns of victory in the palace, and here the breezes blew pleasantly in the morning." Zain-ul-Abidin built another three storeyed house on the small island in the Dal lake called Suna Lank.

With the advent of the Mughal rule in the Valley, the style of architecture underwent another alteration. No more did the wooden structures remain in vogue. The Mughal Emperors mostly distinguished themselves by planning and constructing beautiful and lovely gardens which added to the scenic charm of the Valley and made it the most attractive spot in the world. Almost all these gardens are built in beautiful surroundings on the hillsides where water is available in abundance to feed the waterfalls and the fountains. The most famous of the Mughal gardens are the Shalimar garden which was built by Jahangir in 1620 A.C., the Nishat garden built by Asaf Khan, brother of Nur Jahan, in 1634 A.C., the Chashma-i-Shahi garden laid out by Shah Jahan in 1632 A.C., the Achhabal garden built by Jahan Ara, daughter of Shah Jahan in 1640 A,C., the Nasim Bagh and the Verinag spring with its garden. In these gardens side canals start from the main stream and culminate in the *baradaris* which are built on the gateways. "The system of water-irrigation and the tank construction, the key-note of the Persian gardening traditions, was followed by the Mughals in almost all their gardens in Kashmir and the rest of India", writes Kaumadi."But they harmoniously combined this central feature of the Persian proto-type with the artistically laid out plans of the flower beds and trees, popular among the Hindus and the Buddhists."[1]

But the Mughals did not confine their work of construction to planting of pleasure gardens. They erected other public buildings and mosques as well. The style of all these is practically the same as that of the buildings in Delhi and other towns

[1] *Kashmir, its cultural heritage* by Kaumadi, Page 175.

in India built by them. Only in place of marble which was not locally available in Kashmir and difficult to transport from India, they have used polished stones and bricks. The earliest Mughal building in Srinagar is the high and impressive wall around Hari Parbat hill which was built by Akbar in 1596 A.C. The Pathar Masjid built entirely of stone, in contradistinction to the indigenous wooden structures, was built by Noor Jahan in 1622 A.C.; the mosque of Akhund Mulla Shah was erected a little later. In the opinion of Nicholls, these constructions are unsurpassed in purity of style and perfection of detail by any Mughal buildings in Delhi or Agra. A notable building is Pari Mahal (Fairy Palace) now in ruins on the spur of the Zebarwan mountain which commands an enchanting view of the Dul lake and its romantic surroundings. It is also called Quntilun. It was built by Dara Shikoh to house a School of Astronomy and is therefore a monument to the love of letters and learning that the Mughals cherished. The Pari Mahal has six terraces and its ruins are a standing witness to the lovely and useful building that it once must have been.

The Mughals also built many rest houses and *sarais* on the imperial route from the Punjab to Kashmir for the convenience of travellers and distinguished visitors to the Valley. They are simple structures comprising of two square courts placed side by side.

The building of bridges across the Vitasta had been started early in Kashmir history. As has already been stated, the first bridge was erected by Parvarsen II in the sixth century A.C. Other Hindu Kings also built bridges and it is said that the present seven bridges were found by Muslims already in existence across the river in some form. But the stone architecture was not suited to build permanent bridges. The wooden architecture of the Muslims made that possible and Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin invented cantilever bridges by building the Zaina Kadal. Other Muslim kings followed him by erecting other bridges across Vitasta in Srinagar, on the same model.

The Sultans of Kashmir as well as the Mughal Emperors were the lovers of fine arts and encouraged music, dancing

and painting. Bud Shah was the greatest patron of the arts of peace. His love for music and dancing was immense. In his time there was a great influx of expert musicians and dancers both men and women. Srivara the historian himself was a musician and a connoisseur of this art. The chronicles recorded by him are throughout interspersed with accounts of the renowned musicians and dancers at the courts of Shah Miri Sultans and what deep interest the kings took in singing and dancing. Describing one such assembly in Bud Shah's time, Srivara says: "The spectators and the singers knew literature, rhetoric and philosophy and appreciated merit. Young women proficient in music, possessed of sweet voice and with a genuine ardour for song graced the palace. The men were learned and dignified and fond of enjoyment and they displayed their taste and their intelligence on stage. The renowned Tara and the actors sang various songs to the *Naracha* tune and to every kind of music. And the songstress Utsava who was even like cupid's arrow, charming to the eye, and proficient in dance, both swift and slow, entranced everyone. The actresses who displayed the forty-nine different emotions seemed like the ascending and descending notes of music personified."[1] Uttha Soma, a poet, who flourished at the court of Bud Shah wrote a book named *Manaka* on music and dedicated it to the Sultan.

Sultan Haider Shah was so skilled in playing on the lute that he gave lessons even to the professors on the subject. The popularity of music reached such heights in the time of Sultan Hussain Shah that as many as twelve hundred musicians from India were employed at his court. A separate department was established for the purpose and Srivara was appointed as its head. The king was well versed in Sanskrit and could chant verses in that language quite melodiously but he preferred to hear Kashmiri songs and was never so happy as when singing them. "The female dancers of the king shone beauteously and bright like the lamps at night", says Srivara. "They were inflamed by the god of love and were young and full of emotions. The female dancers Ratnamala, Dipmala and Nripmala danced

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Pp. 133-36.

charmingly displaying emotions and gestures."[1] Pavarakdana was celebrated for his song, poetry and music on whom Hussain Shah showered gold in recognition of merit. Mirza Haider Dughlat was so much interested in music that at occasions he forgot the work of the State. In his time there were many people who were skilled in the art and their lutes, dulcimers, harps, drums and flutes were well known. Usuf Shah Chak, the unfortunate lover of the celebrated Habba Khatun, was a great lover of music. As a matter of fact it was the song of Habba that attracted him to her. It is said that he was so proficient in this art that he once even corrected Tan Sain, the famous musician at Akbar's court, and that great singer duly acknowledged the correction.

Many painters flourished during the medieval times. One of them was Mulla Jamil who adorned the court of Bud Shah and was pre-eminent among the contemporary painters. The celebrated group of painters at the court of Akbar included five painters from Kashmir according to Percy Brown, the author of *Indian Painting under the Mughals.* In the Indian section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, there are twenty-four large paintings on cotton which were produced in Kashmir four centuries ago. The subjects dealt with in these paintings are scenes of battles and bloodshed. The scenic beauties of the Kashmir mountains are depicted in all of them. Probably these paintings were executed during the days when Mirza Haider Dughlat was at the helm of affairs in the Valley.

Most of the several arts and crafts that are flourishing now in the Valley owe their origin to the Muslim Kings particularly Zain-ul-Abidin. It was Bud Shah who introduced the use of paper in place of *Bhoj Patr* (birch bark) for writing purposes. And he taught the local people how the paper could be manufactured. This gave an impetus to learning and production of literature. Other crafts that were introduced by the Great King were stone-polishing, stone-cutting, gold-beating etc. The manufacture of shawl was

[2] Ibid, Page 136.

known in the early ages, but it was Sultan Qutub-ud-Din who patronised, nourished and stimulated the industry. The feature of red and green spots in regular rows in the texture of shawls is the invention of one Naghaz Beg who lived in the middle of the sixteenth century while the floral designs were introduced in the reign of the Mughal Emperor, Mohammed Shah.

The embroidery, *gabba*-manufacture, silk-rearing, book-binding, papier-mache, silver and copper works, wood-carving, leather-tanning and many other crafts which have made the Kashmir artisanship famous all over the globe in modern times, had their small beginnings in the middle ages under the Muslim monarchs.

CHAPTER FIVE

DARK YEARS OF TYRANNY

AT the decline and disruption of the Mughal Empire the governors in Kashmir had become irresponsible and cruel forcing the nobles, the traditional political leaders of the masses, to approach the rising Afghan power in the north-west and to seek its help for the liberation of the Valley from the clutches of the Mughal tyrants. For thousands of years the two peoples of Kashmir and Gandhara (modern N. W. F. Province and East Afghanistan) had been culturally and politically allied, treating each other as friends and equals in days of weal and woe. It was not therefore anything surprising or unprecedented that the Kashmir nobles sought assistance of Ahmad Shah Durrani in this misfortune in the hope that the Afghans would prove the friends of Kashmir people in the days of their need. But no sooner was the Valley annexed by Durrani to his Afghan kingdom than the Kashmiris found they were thrown from the frying pan into the fire. The very first Afghan Governor, Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqasi, who ruled the Valley for only six months proved to be a ferocious bigot, a tyrant and a barbarian. He dealt very harshly with the people and extorted money from them by all conceivable methods. The people had already been impoverished by the Mughal governors and were famished. But Aqasi was determined to amass wealth by hook or by crook. On his return to Kabul, he presented one crore of rupees to the king. This was besides the fortune that he had made for himself. Aqasi brought the business and trade of Kashmir to a standstill. All the big merchants of the Valley left the country which was ruined economically.

The Afghans could not stabilise the Government in their own native land nor rule in peace. Ahmad Shah Durrani was throughout his life involved in wars with India. So were his descendants who also fought among themselves for the crown

and treated each other savagely by applying lancet to the eyes of the fallen prince. In these circumstances most of their governors in Kashmir were tempted to revolt against the imperial authority at Kabul and declare their independence. This caused repeated conflict between the Afghan kings and their satraps with the result that the peaceful Kashmiris were ruined and reduced to a very miserable plight.

Most of the Afghan governors were uncultured and incorrigible fanatics. They imposed severe restrictions on the religious observances and rituals of the Hindus. Many temples were desecrated and the idols broken. The governors forbade the wearing of sacred thread by the Pandits and disallowed teaching of Sanskrit or performance of Hindu mode of worship. During the greater part of the Afghan rule it became difficult for Hindu women and indeed for Kashmiri women in general, to move about freely because an Afghan, if he so willed, could lay hands upon any beautiful damsel and put her in his *harem*. Many Kashmiris, both male and female, were captured, made slaves and sent as presents to their masters, friends or kinsmen at Kabul by the Afghan rulers. Never before had the people in the Valley experienced a barbarous method of administration as they did during the period of Afghan rule. A Persian proverb on the lips of the Kashmiris throughout the period said that cutting off a head was like plucking a flower to these stone-hearted men.

Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqasi was strangely enough succeeded by a Hindu, Sukh Jiwan Mal. He had been nominated by Aqasi himself to rule temporarily when the latter was called to Kabul. But Sukh Jiwan proved to be a clever fellow. His chief adviser was a capable Kashmir Muslim, Abdul Hassan Bande. Both together tried to improve the lot of the people and were to a certain extent successful in their endeavours. But the regime proved short-lived. The Afghan rulers were pre-occupied with their campaigns against India and Iran. They needed money and demanded it from Sukh Jiwan. It was impossible for him to extort a huge sum from the people of the Valley. He therefore refused to pay and what was more, when pestered with

the demand, asserted his independence with the advice of his Councillor Bande. The pro-Afghan faction in Kashmir opposed him but was vanquished in a battle at Baramulla.

Things went on merrily for a few years but unfortunately differences arose between Sukh Jiwan and Bande which resulted in the dismissal of the latter and appointment of his rival Mir Muqim in his place. After this, Sukh Jiwan is reported to have become harsh towards Muslims. Now the Afghans in alliance with Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu attacked Kashmir, faced Sukh Jiwan and defeated him. He was captured, blinded and sent to Lahore in chains where Ahmad Shah Durrani caused him to be trampled to death.

But the re-assertion of Ahmad Shah Durrani as Emperor did not in any way better the lot of Kashmir. Governors followed in quick succession, but it became difficult for any one of them to wield his authority successfully because of factional feuds. As a matter of fact, some of them had to wage battles against their predecessors or other aspirants for power to reach the capital. And when finally they succeeded in doing so they only began their careers of oppression and terrorism. Virtually there ensued anarchy in the land and adventurers and unscrupulous power hunters were on the lookout to become governors. In the time of Governor Khurrum Khan one such opportunist, Amir Mohammed Khan Jawan Sher Qazilbash, Commander-in-Chief of the Afghan forces in the Valley, drove out the former and installed himself as the ruler of the country. He built the fort at Shergarhi and constructed the Amira Kadal bridge. Meanwhile Ahmad Shah died on the 13th April 1772 A.C. Taking advantage of the opportunity, Jawan Sher set himself up as an independent ruler and remained in power for six years.

Jawan Sher was a Shia by faith and by his ill-conceived policy revived the Shia-Sunni controversy. "He was cruel both to Hindus and Muslims", says Sufi. "His rule became notorious for oppression and high-handedness."

When Timur Shah the successor of Ahmad Shah Durrani established himself on the throne at Kabul, he deputed Haji Karimdad Khan as Governor of Kashmir. The governor-desig-

nate came with a strong force, defeated Jawan Sher and sent him in chains to Kabul. George Forester who visited the Valley in 1783 A.C., says: "The force sent against him (Jawan Sher) was small and ill-equipped and might have been easily repelled by a few resolute men stationed in the passes. But Kashmiris reconciled their conduct to the Persian by urging that if he had remained in Kashmir he would have converted them all to the faith of Ali and cut them off from hope of salvation."[1] Haji Karimdad conquered Skardu and vanquished Ranjit Dev, Raja of Jammu, who attempted to annex the Valley. But, true to the Afghan tradition, Karimdad Khan excelled his predecessors in oppression and cruelty. "Haji Karimdad was rather heartless and killed alike Hindus and Muslims on provocation. His exactions through Aslam Harkara, his unscrupulous tax-collector, exceeded even those of the notorious Itiqad Khan, the Mughal *Subedar*, and compelled many to leave the country. *Zar-i-Nyaz* a tax on *mansabdars* and *jagirdars* was exacted from officials and landlords; *Zar-i-Ashkhas*, another tax, from merchants and bankers, *Zar-i-Hubub*, a tax on grain from farmers. Certain Pandits who were concerned in a conspiracy with the Bambas against Karimdad were exposed to suffocation by smoke. For liberating them Karimdad realised a large indemnity called *Zar-i-dud*".[2] He also levied an anna per rupee on the price of shawls from the weavers.

Karimdad was very cruel towards Shias and heartlessly destroyed Amirabad a town which Jawan Sher had founded for the Shia community.

At Karimdad's death his son Azad Khan became the governor. For his ferociousness and bad temper this man is known as Nadir Shah of Kashmir. Like many of his predecessors he also declared his independence but was forced to pay three lakhs of rupees by Timur Shah, the Afghan King, as a tribute which, of course, Azad extorted from his wretched subjects. During Azad's rule Kashmir suffered frightfully from a devastating famine when even salt was sold at rupees four a *seer*.

[1] *Journey*, by George Forester, Pp. 15-16.
[2] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 316.

Again governors were deputed in quick succession from Kabul. One of them Mir Hazar Khan declared his independence and dealt blows at the poor Shias and the Hindus by imposing special new taxes on them.

In 1795 A.C. Abdullah Khan Halokozai became the governor and ruled for eleven years. Meanwhile Nand Ram Tikku a remarkable Kashmiri Pandit rose to be a minister at the Afghan court where he wielded immense power and prestige. His protege Har Das was the *diwan* of Abdullah Khan. In 1800 A.C. differences arose between the governor and his *diwan* resulting in the recall of the former and his imprisonment in Bala Hissar fort. But at this time a tussle broke out for the throne of Kabul. One after the other Zaman Shah and Mohammed Shah were deposed and Shuja-ul-Mulk established himself as the King. Such unsettled times offered an opportunity to Abdullah Khan to escape from his imprisonment and return to Kashmir where he installed himself as an independent ruler. The Afghans attacked the Valley in 1807 A.C. and while a siege of the fort at Biru was on, Abdullah Khan died.

Ata Mohammed Khan was now nominated to be the next governor. Soon after his installation the seat of power at Kabul was again involved in strife. Shah Shuja was ousted by Mohammed Shah and turned out of the country. Ata Mohammed set himself as an independent ruler and tried to be benevolent and just. He strengthened the defences of the country by constructing a number of small forts at Sopore, Baramulla and on the summit of the Hari Parbat hillock. He revived trade and gave an impetus to commerce. As a mark of respect for the public opinion and national sentiment of the Kashmiris, he struck coins in the name of Nund Rishi, the patron saint of the Valley. Through the assistance of Nand Ram Tikku, Ata Mohammed coaxed Shah Shuja, the banished Afghan King, to come to Kashmir where he was lodged in the fort of Hari Parbat. But this proved a source of trouble as Mohammed Shah the Afghan monarch, took offence at it and in alliance with Ranjit Singh, Maharaja of the Punjab, attacked Kashmir in 1813 A.C. The alliance was fraudulent as both the

Afghans and the Sikhs wanted to capture Kashmir but the former forestalled the latter by entering the Valley first and after defeating Ata Mohammed installed Sardar Mohammed Azim Khan as their own governor at Srinagar.

In 1814 A.C. Ranjit Singh invaded Kashmir under the pretext that he had been promised eight lakhs of rupees by the Afghans for the previous year's campaign but the amount was not paid in full. The Maharaja himself remained at Poonch and the Sikh armies attacked the Valley from two sides through Tosha Maidan and Hurpur. The soldiers came by unfrequented paths and in the beginning appeared successful. But the heavy rain and intense cold retarded the progress of the invading armies. On receiving an unfounded information that his armies at Hurpur near Shopian had been routed, Ranjit Singh hastily retreated to Bhimber pursued by a commander of the Afghan forces. The remnants of the Sikh armies were unnerved and took to flight.

Azim Khan had been hateful for his acts of cruelty from the very start of his career. Flushed with this victory, he became more ruthless and tyrannical. There is no proof that any of the Kashmir nobles had yet sought any outside help to overthrow the Afghan rule. But Azim was suspicious because of his own misdeeds and evil intentions. He called to account those leading Pandits whom he considered responsible for inducing Ranjit Singh to undertake the invasion of Kashmir. Many Muslims also suffered with the Pandits, says Sufi, for their complicity, both losing their estates. Azim Khan also discharged all the Kashmiri soldiers from the Army because he distrusted their loyalty.

Realising that the freedom of their country had once again come under a heavy shadow, the nobles of tne Valley saw no alternative but to resort to the time-honoured practice of approaching some powerful neighbour. Towards whom could they turn but the redoubtable Ranjit Singh ? In 1818-19 A.C. Birbal Dar, a Pandit *Jagirdar*, left the Valley stealthily and went straight to the court of the Sikh potentate at Lahore. Birbal's flight in mid-winter across the snow-

covered mountains at Pir Panchal was made possible by the support which was willingly offered by Malik Kamdar and Malik Namdar, two Muslim landlords, as well as by large numbers of Muslim peasants in the Kulgam *pargana*. The wounds of the crushing defeat sustained by him in 1814 A.C. were still fresh in Ranjit Singh's memory. Therefore he hesitated to try his luck once again. While he was still wavering in his decision, Azim Khan was recalled to Kabul at this critical time, who left his own brother Jabbar Khan behind in charge of the affairs in the Valley. This change encouraged Birbal to urge the Sikh Maharaja to make the fateful attempt. The Kashmir noble held himself responsible for all the consequent loss in case of defeat. As a guarantee he surrendered his own son Raj Kak Dar as a hostage till the termination of the military campaign.

Jabbar Khan proved to be the last and the most contemptible Afghan governor. His brief rule was characterised by policy of senseless cruelty which made Kashmiris desperate and determined to end the Afghan rule. Therefore this time it proved virtually a walk-over for Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He came, he saw and he conquered. Lahore was illuminated for three days in honour of the victory. "The stupidity of the Afghan, his greed and his exactions are responsible for this loss to him", says Sufi. "His intolerance and extortion are still on the lips of those whose ancestors suffered at his hands".

But the change of masters, again, to the great distress of the victimised people, proved but a change of king log for king stork. The Sikhs were no less cruel, rapacious, short-sighted, intolerant and fanatical than the Afghans. "The Sikhs looked upon Kashmiris as little better than cattle", wrote William Moorcroft, who visited Kashmir in 1824 A.C. with the permission of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. "The murder of a native by a Sikh was punished with a fine to the government of from sixteen to twenty rupees of which four were paid to the family of the deceased if a Hindu, and two if he was a Mohammedan". Moorcroft found that everywhere the people were in a most

abject condition "subjected to every kind of extortion and oppression."

Under Sikh supremacy Kashmir was ruled by ten governors. It is interesting that out of these, five were Hindus, three Sikhs and two Muslims. The first governor was Misr Diwan Chand who remained in charge only for about a year. He was succeeded by Diwan Moti Ram for a short while but was recalled and replaced by Hari Singh Nalwa. The latter however proved oppressive and hateful and Moti Ram was deputed again. It was in Moti Ram's second tenure of office that William Moorcroft visited the Valley.

In the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, as to a considerable extent even today, religion played the most effective part in the administration of the country. If Afghans were less tyrannical towards the Muslim nobles the Sikh governors treated the Hindu *jagirdars* and landlords less harshly. Of course the poor sections of all communities, the masses, suffered equally. Naturally just as it fell to the lot of Pandit nobles to lead the struggle for the freedom of the country during the time of the Afghans the fight was now taken up by the Muslim gentry. They would gather in the mosques and other religious shrines to conspire for the overthrow of the Sikhs and to achieve independence. Diwan Moti Ram therefore closed *Jama Masjid* so that Muslims may not be able to assemble in large numbers. He planned to demolish Khanqah-i-Maulla and as a matter of fact installed guns on the opposite *ghat* of the Vitasta for the purpose. But the Hindus no less than the Muslims opposed this measure which was in flagrant violation of the noble principles of the Kashmir culture. "It is to the lasting credit of Pandit Birbal Dar that, when a deputation of Muslims headed by Hassan Shah Qadiri Khanayari approached him, he dissuaded the Sikhs from the destruction of the *Khanqah*", writes Sufi. "He moved in the matter, used his influence and saved this historic structure from vandalism".[1]

Diwan Moti Ram forbade cow-slaughter and declared it to be a crime punishable with death. Some Muslims accused

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. II, Page 726.

of it were actually hanged and dragged through the streets. One whole family suspected of the crime was even burnt alive in their house by the police.

Moti Ram's successor Diwan Chuni Lal proved no better. But he was followed by Diwan Kripa Ram a romantic person of whom the traveller Vigne records that he was the kindest and best of all Sikh governors. He was a lover of luxury without being tyrannical. The companionship of dancing girls was his rage and even his boats were paddled by women whose hands and feet were adorned with tiny bells to produce attractive sounds while the boat moved on. For this reason the governor was called "Kripa Shroyn". The merry-making days of Jahangir were revived in the Valley in his time. But Kripa Ram's revelry was disliked by the Lahore Court. He was recalled, humiliated and dismissed.

During the rule of the next governor, Bhima Singh Ardali, there was a Shia-Sunni trouble when Hassanabad and Zadibal, the two densely inhabited localities of Shias, were burnt.

Prince Sher Singh, the son of Ranjit Singh, governed the Valley for two years from 1832-34 A.C. He abandoned himself to enjoyment and handed over the country to the tender mercies of his *Naib* Basakha Singh with the inevitable results. A terrible famine broke out which reduced the population of the country from 800,000 to 200,000.

Then came Colonel Mehan Singh Kumedan who ruled Kashmir from 1834-41 A.C. "Mehan Singh was unusually brave having had twenty-seven wounds on his body. He was also a man of his word. There are several stories of his sense of justice. He endeavoured to revive the trade, industry and agriculture of the Valley............ He did his best, in the beginning, to mitigate the ravages of famine and with a view to stimulating population, remitted the tax upon marriages and set to work to bring some order into the administration".[1] Mehan Singh was the only Sikh Governor who firmly put the Sikh soldiers under check so that they do not exercise oppression and create havoc

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. II, Page 739.

as they were wont to do. For this he paid with his life. The soldiers mutinied and assassinated him on the night of 17th April 1841 A.C.

Meanwhile Maharaja Ranjit Singh had died in 1839 A.C. and a shameful struggle for power, an internecine feud was in progress at Lahore. The last two governors under Sikhs were Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din and his son Sheikh Imam-ud-Din who were mild though weak. But it was not in their power to effect any drastic change in the policy of the Sikh administration. They were helpless before the Sikh soldiery and had to cater to the wishes of the faction at the Lahore Court which was responsible for their appointment. Kashmir was again in confusion and passing through a period of gloom. Not only did oppression prevail in their time but people were heavily taxed and money was extorted from them in every possible manner. The officials were extremely corrupt and life and property of the citizens were always in danger. The government appropriated a large portion of the produce of the soil and almost the whole of the remaining was taken away by corrupt officials. People were reduced to abject poverty and the cultivator would not voluntarily till the land. Forced labour was revived with renewed vigour, if not introduced for the first time, and people were made to work against their will. The country was seething with discontent and to keep the people under control a new class of landlords was created and *jagirs* were granted to them. At the advent of the Dogra Rule it was found that no less than 3115 *jagirs* had thus been granted.

By the end of the Sikh Rule the people were thoroughly demoralised. They had become known as *zulum parast*, (the worshippers of tyranny). All their old glory, grandeur and heroism had vanished. They were prostrate and at the mercy of any individual who was put at the helm of affairs by alien kings ruling from the seat of power far away outside the boundaries of the State.

Whatever the Mughals did for the advancement of Kashmir they were, like all imperialists, keen to see that the national

spirit of the people of the Valley, which had already been impaired during the rule of later Shahmiris and the Chaks is totally shattered. This policy was pursued with redoubled vigour by the Afghans and the Sikhs. Kashmiri armies were disbanded and no man from the Valley was allowed to be recruited in the Afghan or Sikh forces. Consequently the people of the Valley gradually forgot their glorious martial traditions and became timid and coward. The oppression and terrorism that prevailed for more than a century in the country from 1750-1880 A.C. crushed the people and almost killed their soul. All Kashmiris whether they know anything about their past or not usually remember two things, the greatness of Bud Shah and the bestiality, savagery, cruelty and barbarity of the Afghans. The utter disgust of the Afghan rule is not confined to any class or creed ; all have it both Hindus and Muslims.

How the Kashmiris would have contrived to end the Sikh rule it is difficult to say. But before they could think of doing so, far-reaching political changes of a revolutionary character took place in India which brought the Kashmir Valley also within its orbit. Ranjit Singh died in 1839 A.C. He was succeeded by kings in the Punjab who were imbecile and inefficient. They came into clash with the British who had by then conquered the whole subcontinent of India beyond the boundary of the Sikh Empire. Gulab Singh, Raja of Jammu, who had risen very high in the court of Ranjit Singh during the lifetime of the Sikh Maharaja was appointed Prime Minister of the Punjab. As a shrewd but unscrupulous adventurer Gulab Singh foresaw that the British would be the future masters of the whole of India and therefore it was in his personal interest that he should be on friendly terms with them. He had already helped them in their wars against the Afghans in the North-Western Frontier in 1841 A. C. and thus he formed an alliance with them.

War broke out between Sikhs and the British in November 1845 A.C. The simple Sikh nobles asked Gulab Singh to lead them. He was already in correspondence with the British authorities and therefore readily seized the opportunity by taking the

onerous duties of the Prime Minister of the Sikh Empire upon himself. Though outwardly organising Sikhs against the British, Gulab Singh was all the time thinking of his future and carving a kingdom for himself. With such designs in his mind it was natural that he would not like to present a bold and decisive front to the British. So he left no stone unturned to bring about a compromise. But his endeavour proved unsuccessful. The battle of Subraon was fought and the Sikhs were defeated. In the words of William Edwards: "Gulab Singh urged the army not to attempt attacking the British until he joined them and this he evaded doing on one pretext or another knowing full well that in due time the British would attack and capture the position at Subraon".[1] It was by means such as these that Raja Gulab Singh earned the gratitude of the British diplomats and paved the way for the establishment of the Dogra State in the north of India.

After the battle of Subraon the Sikhs lost their independence and the British marched on Lahore and captured it. On the 9th March, 1846 A.C. the Treaty of Lahore was signed. Among other things provided for in this treaty it was stipulated that Raja Gulab Singh would be recognised as an independent sovereign in such territories and districts in the hills as may be made over to the said Raja by separate agreement between him and the British Government. This separate agreement known to History by the name of the Treaty of Amritsar was signed on the 15th of March 1846 A.C. According to the treaty Gulab Singh was recognised as the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir both by the powerless Sikh Durbar and the British Government. He had to pay an amount of £1,500,000 to the British for the transfer to him of the Kashmir Province including Gilgit, which had been conquered by the Sikhs in 1842 A.C. Articles 1, 3, 9 and 10 of the Treaty of Amritsar will be read with interest.

ARTICLE 1

The British Government TRANSFERS and makes over for ever in independent possession to Maharaja Gulab Singh and the heirs

[1] *Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian,* Page 104.

male of his body all the hilly or mountainous country with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the River Indus and the westward of the River Ravi including Chamba and excluding Lahul, being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State according to the provisions of the Article IV of the Treaty of Lahore, dated March 9, 1846.

ARTICLE 3

In consideration of the transfer made to him and his heirs by the provisions of the foregoing article Maharaja Gulab Singh will pay to the British Government the sum of seventy-five lakhs of rupees (*Nanakshahi*), fifty lakhs to be paid on ratification of this treaty and twenty-five lakhs on or before the 1st October of the current year, A.C. 1846.

ARTICLE 9

The British Government will give its aid to Maharaja Gulab Singh in protecting his territories from external enemies.

ARTICLE 10

Maharaja Gulab Singh will acknowledge the supremacy of the British Government and will in token of such supremacy present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve shawl goats of approved breed (six male and six female) and three pairs of Cashmere Shawls.

While making this transfer the British authorities in India did not so much as ascertain the views of the people of Kashmir on the subject. They did not consult even one of their leaders. It was altogether a sordid, shameful affair devoid of all sense of fairness, justice and equity. Two million of people in the Valley and Gilgit were sold like sheep and cattle to an alien adventurer and the whole transaction was made behind their back. The treaty consisting of ten articles makes no mention whatsoever of the rights, interests or the future of the people. Many years after this disgraceful transaction Dr. Mohammed Iqbal aptly sang about the enslaved people of Kashmir:

"Their fields, their crops, their streams
Even the peasants in the vale
They sold, they sold all, alas !
How cheap was the sale."

With the end of Sikh Rule and the infliction of the Dogra Raj under the protection of British Imperialism, the struggle for the liberation of Kashmir became a part of the war of independence for the whole of the Sub-continent of India which

in itself is an integral part of the world movement for establishment of social democracy in all parts of the globe. Before we proceed any further let us clarify a matter of importance about which there appears to be confusion in the minds of many people of Kashmir.

Two words are frequently used by the educated people in general and politicians in particular while speaking about the Liberation Movement of their country. They are *independence* and *freedom.* They are often used without any distinction which causes a confusion. A country is independent when it is ruled by the sons of the soil irrespective of the structure of the government which might be autocratic, oligarchical, constitutional, republican or democratic. On the other hand a country can be recognised as free only when the people living in it enjoy liberty in political, social, economic and intellectual spheres in accordance with the commonly established standards of the time. Though generally it is very difficult yet in rare cases people have enjoyed a modicum of freedom even under alien rules and it is well known that all countries of the world have at one time or another been independent but despotically, cruelly and ruthlessly governed.

People and politicians in Kashmir differ in their views about the past independence and freedom of their motherland. Most of them are confused because they do not draw the distinction between the two. To all Hindus Kashmir lost its freedom and independence in 1339 A.C. when the Muslim rule was firmly established in the Valley by Shah Mir. The Muslims do not think so. They are of the opinion that Kashmir was never so prosperous or progressive as when under the Muslim rule. They believe that the Valley lost independence when the Sikhs conquered the country in 1819 A.C. Obviously the Sikhs cannot agree with them.

The Nationalists of Kashmir have been lately speaking with a divided voice. Some of them agree with their Hindu colleagues that Kashmir lost freedom when the alien Shah Mir usurped power at the death of Udayanadeva in 1339 A.C. But most of them, perhaps under the fear that such a view will

make them unpopular with their Muslim brethren, hold the view that Kashmir was enslaved by Akbar in 1586 A.C. when he annexed the Valley to the Mughal Empire.

Now all these views are erroneous, because they do not follow any principles. If by independence of Kashmir we mean the rule by her own people, history will tell us that Kashmir has been independent neither throughout the Buddhist or Hindu periods nor under the Muslim, Sikh or Dogra rules. Out of the twenty-eight dynasties that ruled the Valley till 1339 A.C., the founders of no less than ten came from outside. As we know Shah Mir belonged to the Swat Valley and the fore-father of Chaks, Lankar Chak, was a foreigner. About the Mughals, Pathans, Sikhs and Dogras one need not say that they were not Kashmiris.

As regards the freedom of the people the history of Kashmir records that just as kingly virtues like enlightenment, patronage of learning, love of their subjects and solicitude for their advancement and prosperity, were neither the monopoly of Kashmiri nor of non-Kashmiri monarchs; similarly the vices of power like despotism, cruelty and profligacy also fell equally to the share of both.

From times immemorial, Kashmir patriots have fought for both independence as well as freedom of their country. But bitter experience in life in the long course of history had taught them that if both could not be had together they should prefer freedom to independence. For that reason when capable leaders were not forthcoming in their motherland, the people invited strong and noble-minded men from outside to rule over them and then they owned them as their kings. It may be that the leaders lacked a strong national sentiment and were more power-hunters than patriots. But as it is if a ruler proved good and benevolent the people did not care whether he was a Kashmiri or not. This view was so popular during the earlier period that Kalhana did not find it worthwhile to mention in his History that Asoka conquered Kashmir and annexed it to his Indian Empire. To him the Mauryan Emperor was as good as any Kashmiri king.

It will be remembered that Kota Rani, when she attained political maturity, was anxious to preserve the independence of her motherland by marrying Udayanadeva in 1322 A.C. at the death of Rinchen (Sultan Sadar-ud-Din) though she must have been fully aware of the fact that her Hindu consort was unfit to give any freedom to the country by establishing peace or introducing measures of good government for the prosperity of the people. Even after Udayanadeva ran away to Ladakh to save his life at the time of the invasion by Urdil, Kota Rani recalled him and reinstalled him on the throne thereby incurring the displeasure of Shah Mir. The motive of the queen was to preserve the independence of Kashmir. For reasons beyond her power she was unsuccessful in her endeavours.

The same was the case when during the reign of Fath Shah and Mohammed Shah the two great Kashmiri patriots Kazi Chak and Abdal Magre, forgetting their own differences and ignoring the confusion and chaos that had been produced in the country by weaklings on the throne, rallied round the State banner and heroically fought against Babur and Mirza Haider Doughlat. This time Kashmir Nationalism won but the victory did not last long. The spirit of freedom triumphed over the sentiment of independence. As has been described earlier only three decades later, a deputation of the leading nobles of Kashmir went to the Court of Akbar with the request that the Emperor may despatch his armies to liberate the people of the Valley from the demoralised, corrupt and inefficient Chak rule.

Thus it is evident that for the people of Kashmir the difficult choice between independence and freedom has presented itself now and again in the course of the long history of five thousand years. It was only in the thirties of the present century that Kashmiris began to struggle simultaneously for independence as well as freedom with how much of success and failure we shall now proceed to survey.

The handing over of Kashmir to the Dogras could not be effected without trouble. Gulab Singh despatched some troops

under Wazir Lakhpat to take over the charge but the Governor Sheikh Imam-ud-Din who appears not to have been so unpopular with the people as other governors appointed by the Lahore Durbar before him, refused to surrender. A fight ensued between the Kashmiris and the Dogras on the plain lying between the Vitasta and the fort of the Shankrachari hill in which Gulab Singh's troops were defeated and Wazir Lakhpat was slain. Gulab Singh appealed to the British to carry out the provisions of the treaty. A mixed force of the British and the Sikhs was promptly despatched. Meawhile Imam-ud-Din came to know all about the defeat of the Sikhs at Subraon and the Treaty of Amritsar. The transfer of the country was effected without any further ado. Thus by the middle of the nineteenth century in 1846 A.C. was formed the present State of Jammu and Kashmir including Ladakh, Baltistan and Gilgit under the first ruler of the Dogra dynasty.

Foreign rule was not new to the Kashmiris in 1846 A.C. But Dogras were strange foreign rulers who were themselves vassals of another mightier power which had by then brought the whole of India under its sway. Besides, the Dogras were not like those alien masters who came in the past and lived in the Valley as its permanent inhabitants. The Dogras have always considered Jammu as their home and Kashmir as the conquered country. As we shall presently see they established a sort of Dogra imperialism in the State in which the Dogras were elevated to the position of the masters and all non-Dogra communities and classes were given the humble places of inferiors. The people of the Valley were thus brought under the imperialism of the Dogras which itself was functioning as a vassal of the super-imperialism of the British. But though Dogra imperialism brought nothing but misery, thraldom, physical and mental deterioration in its wake, the other imperialism did not come without some blessings. By coming under the British suzerainty the Valley began to have the impact of western ideas and modern civilisation which finally awakened the people to demand their birth-right of independence and freedom.

It was a great misfortune of the Kashmiris that the British, after having defeated the Sikhs, did not take the Valley directly under their own control. They had some solid reasons not to do so. But had they taken that step Kashmiris would have been spared much misery and many hardships that they had to endure during the Dogra rule. Several problems that have confronted the Kashmiris, in the past hundred years would not have cropped up at all. And the present accession issue would surely not have been there. Besides, under the British administration Kashmiris would have imbibed modernism quite rapidly. Modernism did come to the Valley during the Dogra rule but it was not because Dogras wanted to make the Kashmiris modern in outlook, in education and in culture but in spite of them. As a matter of fact they have worked as a brake on the progress of the people of Kashmir. For their own reasons the British bemoaned the step they took in handing over the Valley to the Dogras. They even utilised dubious methods to get it back. But then it was too late.

Be that as it may, let us proceed with the narration of our history of the Freedom Movement during the past hundred years.

Maharaja Gulab Singh proved to be a strong and stern ruler. He tried to bring back peace and order for which the people were clamouring. The methods he applied, however, were of a savage nature and he was very rapacious and greedy. In his *Travels*, Vigne narrates that an insurrection took place near Poonch against the authority of Gulab Singh who went in person to suppress it. "Some of his prisoners were flayed alive under his own eyes. The executioner hesitated and Gulab Singh asked him if he were about to operate upon his own father and mother, and rated him for being so chicken-hearted. He then ordered one or two of the skins to be stuffed with straw......The figures were then planted on the wayside so that passerby might see it ; and Gulab Singh called his son's attention to it, and told him to take a lesson in the Art of Governing".

Gulab Singh tried to rule the country justly according to his own lights, but partly owing to the exigencies of the unset-

tled and unprogressive times and partly to his own avarice and greed, he could not improve the economic condition of the people. It continued to be most dilapidated, verging on starvation. "This last state was worse than the first", wrote Lieutenant Colonel Torrens, "for Gulab Singh went beyond his predecessors in the gentle acts of undue taxation and extortion. They had taxed heavily it is true, but he sucked the very life blood of the people. They had laid violent hands on a large proportion of the fruits of the earth, the profits of the loom and the work of men's hands, but he skinned the very flints to fill his coffers". Even K.M. Pannikar, who served as an official of the government under the Dogras and wrote an inspired biography of the Maharaja had to admit that Gulab Singh "did not achieve his ends by methods which were always beyond criticism. He did not hesitate to resort to tricks and stratagems which would, in ordinary life, be considered dishonourable. He was trained in a hard school, where lying, intrigue and treachery were all considered part and parcel of politics".[1]

Gulab Singh was succeeded by his son Ranbir Singh in 1858 A.C. He was a man of peace and respected men of learning. But like his father he did not or could not improve the lot of his people. The difficulty with the Dogras was that they were not well educated or informed themselves; they took extreme caution not to allow the Britishers to interfere in their administration with the result that the people remained ignorant and backward for a long time till the Imperialist Government was forced to take the matter in their own hands and introduce the necessary reforms. According to Sir Francis Younghusband: "In the early sixties cultivation was decreasing, the people were wretchedly poor there were few men of respectable, none of wealthy appearance" and "there were almost prohibitive duties levied on all merchandise, imported or exported". The method of levying taxes was stated by Sir Francis in the following words:

> "On the manufacture of shawls, parallel restrictions were placed. Wool was taxed as it entered Kashmir; the manufacturer was taxed

[1] *Gulab Singh*, Page 152.

> for every workman he employed, and also at various stages of the process according to the value of fabric. Lastly there was the enormous duty of 85 per cent *ad valorem*. Butchers, bakers, carpenters, boatmen, and even prostitutes were taxed. Poor coolies, who were engaged to carry load for travellers, had to give up half their earnings."

And with the revenue that accrued to the State coffers by this method of exorbitant taxation, what was spent on the moral and material progress of the people ? About half a lakh of rupees was spent upon education and another half lakh on repairing of the "paths".

Famines have been by no means a rarity in the Valley but the famine of 1877 A.C. was so severe that it is still remembered with horror by Kashmiris. When this calamity fell upon the people the administration was most inefficient to protect them. As a result thousands of people died of starvation and dead bodies could be seen by heaps lying on the roadside. A number of valleys were deserted ; whole villages lay in ruins ; the city of Srinagar was half destroyed. The business came to a standstill and the whole population passed through the most miserable period.

CHAPTER SIX

DAWN OF MODERNISM

AT the death of Ranbir Singh in 1885 A.C. his eldest son Pratap Singh ascended the throne. The condition of the Valley of Kashmir at that time was deplorable. In his book Sir Walter Lawrence who served as the first Settlement Commissioner of the State writes that in 1887 A.C. the Kashmir State was bankrupt. "The rich land was left uncultivated and the army was employed in forcing the villagers to plough and sow, and worse still, the soldiers came at the harvest time and when the share of the State had been seized and these men of war had helped themselves, there was very little given to the unfortunate peasants to tide over the cruel winter when the snow lies deep and temperature falls below zero".[1] Sir Walter records that when he started settlement of the land everything save air and water was under taxation. Even the office of the grave-digger was taxed.

It was not surprising that the vitality of the people had been extremely undermined and the country witnessed successive epidemics of cholera in 1888, 1892, 1900-1902, 1906-1907 and 1910 A.C. and an outbreak of plague in 1903-1904 A.C. which decimated the population. Other misfortunes were the earthquake shocks of 1885 A.C. which were very severe in intensity and heavy floods of 1893 and 1903 A.C. which destroyed property and produce of land enormously.

At the time of Pratap Singh's accession to the throne the Dogras had already ruled the Valley for nearly forty years. Yet beyond restoring order in the land they had been able to achieve little. Indeed as we have shown above the people had deteriorated physically as well as intellectually. The cultural level of the Valley had gone down considerably. The credit for

[1] *The India we served*, Page 128.

maintenance of peace should go to Pax Britannica because, apart from the Dogra's barbarous methods of administering justice, it was in reality the prowess of the mighty British Government that kept the internal conditions undisturbed. Had the Kashmiris known that the Dogras had no support of the powerful British, undoubtedly they should have made attempts to overthrow them quite early in their rule. But they were aware of the fact that despite Imam-ud-Din's victory in 1846 A.C. over the Dogras, that governor had to surrender because Gulab Singh had the redoubtable British at his back. Therefore they did not make any attempt at insurrection. Instead they thought of approaching the Imperial Power with petitions and grievances against the absolutism and despotism of the Dogras.

As early as 1877 A.C., during the days of the great famine, a memorandum was stealthily submitted to the British Viceroy at Delhi by some unknown Kashmiris making specific charges against Ranbir Singh. The memorandum was never published in full. Parts of it that were subsequently quoted by some informed British writers in their books, show that certain charges levelled were very grave in character. It was said that in order to save the expense of feeding his people during the famine the Maharaja actually drowned his poor Muslim subjects by boat-loads in the Vular lake. The British Government appointed a mixed commission to inquire into the truth of the charges but as no one had the courage to come forward to substantiate them, the Maharaja was exonerated. It appears that the memorandum contained also grievances about misgovernment and maladministration to which the Maharaja had no satisfactory answer. The British Government, however, realized that they could not help the Kashmiris in any manner unless they could have a direct hand in the administration of the country. This they could not dare to do under the provisions of the Treaty of Amritsar which left the Dogras completely free to deal with the internal administration as they liked. The British authorities were therefore hesitant and unwilling to do anything in 1877 A.C.

But soon after in their own imperialist interest, the

British had to step in. Owing to proximity of Czarist Russia on the north of the State, Gilgit, Baltistan and Ladakh were as important and strategic places then as they are now when the big bear has turned red. Britishers were not on good terms with the Czar. They needed to fortify and supervise the frontier and for doing so they decided to interfere. At the death of Ranbir Singh there were his four sons, all hungry for power, as claimants to the throne of Kashmir. Pratap Singh the eldest was conscious of it. Therefore when at the time of his installation on the *Gaddi* he was confronted with the conditions which were formally presented by a British Officer on behalf of the Viceroy that the Maharaja shall have to first introduce certain reforms in his administration and secondly accept a British Officer as a Resident, Pratap Singh had no alternative but to accept these. The matter did not end there. After a while by playing his brothers, chiefly Amar Singh, against him, Pratap Singh was made to accept an arrangement by which he was relieved of all part in the administration which was placed, subject to the control of the Resident, in the hands of a Council of Regency. Doubtless this was a shameful and sordid affair on the part of British imperialists. It was thoroughly dishonest,crooked and mean. Nevertheless it proved a blessing in disguise for the people of the State.

Much excitement was caused in India and abroad by an announcement in the Press that the Maharaja of Kashmir had been found guilty of treasonable activities and that there was ample evidence to prove his treachery. It was said further that the Maharaja, conscious of his guilt, had abdicated and placed his letter of abdication in the hands of the British authorities. Political India in the eighties of the last century was the champion of the rights of native princes. It was considered a patriotic duty by the leaders and the nationalist Press to protect the princes against the onslaughts of the foreign Government. Irrational patriotism considered native rule, however corrupt, absolutist, despotic and cruel as preferable to the domination by the British. Besides, the Maharaja being a Hindu and the ruler of the holy land of Kashmir, became an additional reason

for the Indian leaders to see that he was not deposed. A storm was raised over the imbroglio in which the voice of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta was the loudest. The paper published a document, a minute recorded in the file by H.M. Durand, the then Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, which proved that the British were anxious to take the frontier districts of the State under their direct supervision and for that reason they were determined to interfere in the internal affairs of Kashmir. The Viceroy was very much perturbed and annoyed to read the document in the Press. The storm raised by nationalist India over Kashmir had upset the apple cart of the British. They therefore abandoned the idea of deposing the Maharaja and instead forced him to accept a Council of Regency as already mentioned. Looking back at the events after the lapse of nearly seventy years, one cannot refrain from observing that this time the decision of the British was most unfortunate for the people of Kashmir. Had the British boldly stuck to their resolve, no matter with what purpose, deposed the Maharaja and installed their own direct administration, it would have speedily introduced modernism in the Valley.

However, the appointment of the Regency was better than the unbridled autocracy of the Dogra. The Council of Regency consisted of two brothers of the Maharaja (1) Raja Ram Singh and (2) Raja Amar Singh, (3) an experienced European, (4) Rai Bahadur Pandit Bhag Ram, and (5) Rai Bahadur Pandit Suraj Koul. With the presence of the experienced European as a member and under the direct and close supervision of the British Resident the Council set about its responsibilities and functions in the right earnest.

Having made the position of their Resident quite strong over the affairs of the State and having given a modern bias to the administration of the country, the British gradually restored Pratap Singh to power first in 1891 A.C. as President of the State Council and after some years in 1905 A.C. as a full fledged ruler.

Imperial interests apart, the Government of India was anxious to replace the feudal structure of the State by modern

bureaucratic form of administration. With this purpose in view the British Resident began to interest himself through the State Council in starting and organising all the departments dealing with different branches of administration. But there was a difficulty in making the endeavours a success. There were few local men with the requisite qualifications available to do the jobs and fewer schools and no colleges in the State where the citizens could have been educated for the task.

So men with Western education and training were imported in large numbers from the neighbouring province of the Punjab. "Armies of outsiders trailed behind the officers from the plains with no more interest than to draw as much as they could, and then to depart leaving behind their kindred as successors to continue the drain ; and thus was established a hierarchy in the services with the result that profits and wealth passed into the hands of the outsiders and the indigenous subjects lost enterprise and independence". Thus at the beginning of the present century when Maharaja Pratap Singh was fully restored to power a new problem confronted the people ; that of facing the outsider who had occupied every position of vantage in the administration of the country. From those early times, the struggle for the rights of the people living in the State against outsiders took a definite shape. While the masses were groaning under the unbearable load of taxes and crushing economic poverty, the middle and the upper classes felt displeased and resentful because of this foreign domination in every branch of administration. The feeling of resentment which was running underground for centuries, found an outward expression, though it was not yet directed against the ruler or his administration as such. Representations were made to the Government of India, who, in a letter to the Kashmir Durbar at the close of the last century, sent instructions that in the matter of State employment *mulkis* should be given preference over the outsiders and that this principle should be strictly adhered to. This letter was circulated through all the departments of the State. But the instructions were vague, and it did not produce any effect owing to the fact that any outsider

could call himself a *mulki* by simply declaring himself to be one. The struggle continued and in 1912 A.C. a definition of State Subject' was formulated for the first time. A State subject was one who had obtained an *Ijazat Nama,* a certificate to the effect that the holder was entitled to all the rights of citizenship. Evidently this was inadequate and anyone could secure the certificate for the mere asking. Outsiders continued to be imported in even larger numbers by their kith and kin, who held the Ministers' jobs, besides almost all the posts of the Heads of Departments. Meanwhile, Kashmiris had advanced in education. Early in 1905 A.C. through the strenuous efforts of Mrs Annie Besant, some luminaries of the Theosophical Society and Pandit Bala Kaul of the Sahib family, a Hindu college, which subsequently came to be known as the Sri Pratap College, had been started at Srinagar. Another college was started by the government in the city of Jammu. Many young men passed through the portals of these institutions after completing their course. They imbibed the spirit of the new age. Their minds were full of the ideas of the onrushing tide of democracy in the West. They read with emotion about political movements of Turky, Ireland, Egypt and other countries as also the part young men played in these movements. They saw what, nearer home, young Bengal did to defeat the plan of Lord Curzon to partition that province. Life became visible in the decayed bones of Kashmir again. Her soul began to breathe. The hearts of the people throbbed. The spirit of independence revived and with it came the desire to turn out the outsiders, and to fight for the freedom of the motherland.

Another factor, as yet unnoticeable, was taking shape. Muslims, who form the great majority of the population of the State and who had not taken kindly to modern education, began to feel their backwardness. The cry of "down with the outsiders" was raised mostly by the Hindus. Sensible Muslims did not oppose it but before taking any active part in it, they wanted to make up the deficiency in the matter of education. Time and again they approached the government to grant them some facilities enabling them to make rapid advance in the sphere of

education. It appears that these requests were not heeded in the beginning. The British Government, who had become defenders of the rights of the Muslim majority against a Hindu Maharaja while proposing to deprive Pratap Singh of his powers, did practically nothing to push the Muslims on the path of literacy and education during the period when the Kashmir administration was under the Residency Raj.

The demand of Muslims became irresistible and the Maharaja was moved at last to do something in this direction. In 1916 A. C., Mr Sharp, then Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, visited, at the request of the Kashmir Durbar, the educational institutions in the State, examined the Muslim demands, enquired into their grievances and submitted a report containing his recommendations for the guidance of the State authorities. These recommendations were sanctioned by His Highness but were lightly treated by his Ministers, and instructions issued by him were seldom followed by those in charge of the Education Department, who were invariably non-Kashmiris. As a matter of fact, soon after its publication, the report was safely put in the archives from where nobody could find it out. Fifteen years later an official enquiry commission which was presided over by Mr. B.J. Glancy, Political Secretary to the Government of India, had to admit that "no one appears to be aware of the nature of the report submitted by the educational expert". The Muslims rightly felt aggrieved over such a state of affairs. For years they complained and protested, fretted and fumed, but all to no purpose.

Other communities were in the meantime making some progress. Especially in the Kashmir province the Pandits were making rapid advance in education and had on this account begun to capture the offices as subordinate clerks. Kashmir Muslims became impatient. They had now many grievances against the authorities which were collected and sent to the Maharaja with no results. At this stage a bold step was taken by a few leading Kashmiri Muslims. Recklessly enough a memorial was submitted by them to Lord Reading, then Viceroy of India, when he visited Kashmir in 1924 A. C. In the course of the

memorial the Muslims demanded that proprietary rights of the land should be given to the peasants ; that a larger number of Mohammedans should be employed in the State service ; that steps should be taken to improve the condition of Mohammedan education in the State ; that the system of *begar* should be abolished ; that the work of the Co-operative Department should be extended ; that all Muslim mosques in possession of the Government should be released and handed over to the Muslims. There was nothing revolutionary in the demands which were modest and reasonable. But the Maharaja took an offence at its submission to the British Viceroy. The memorial was signed by some eminent *jagirdars* and the two *Mir Waizes* (The Religious Heads of Muslims) also affixed their signatures to it. Some demonstrations in the State-owned silk factory at Srinagar and disturbances of semi-political nature took place in the city during the summer of that year. But everything was in an embryonic form then and all this was put down by the authorities with a firm hand.

A Committee of three official members, consisting of a European, a Hindu and a Mohammedan, examined the memorial and reported that there was no substance in it ! Some of the memorialists were exiled and their landed property confiscated. The two *Mir Waizes* were let off with a warning, but all official privileges enjoyed by them were immediately stopped. The demonstrators were summarily dealt with and punished.

Maharaja Pratap Singh was unostentatious, peaceful and a benevolent ruler. He was deeply religious and orthodox in his ways. He was genuinely anxious to see even-handed justice administered to all classes and communities of the people. Though the State did not make any great progress in his time yet Pratap Singh lived to abolish a large number of taxes including the Muslim Marriage Tax.

Owing to the exorbitant taxes and the loot of the corrupt officials of the government, most of the cultivators had given up their lands and abandoned the profession of cultivation before Pratap Singh came to the throne. It was with great difficulty that Sir Walter Lawrence, the first Settlement Commis-

sioner, could persuade people to take possession of land. With the bitter experience of the treatment that the authorities meted out to the possessors and cultivators of the soil, city-dwellers and the peasants alike refused to accept the offer of the Settlement Commissioner in the beginning. Ultimately Lawrence's great powers of persuasion succeeded, and he was able to parcel out the land among the people.

The main features of the settlement which Sir Walter effected were: (i) the State demand was fixed for fourteen years, (ii) payment in cash was substituted for payment in kind, (iii) the use of force in the collection of revenue was done away with, (iv) *begar* (forced labour) in its more objectionable form was abolished, (v) occupancy rights were conferred on *zamindars* in undisputed lands, (vi) the status of privileged holders of land was investigated and land in excess of the sanctioned area assessed at the ordinary rates, (vii) waste lands were entered as *khalisa*, (viii) permanent but non-alienable hereditary rights were granted to those who accepted the first assessment, and all land was carefully evaluated on the basis of produce, previous collection and possibility of irrigation. The *rasum* and exactions of *jagirdars* and big landlords were abolished and the rents and liabilities of the cultivators were defined.

The land was parcelled out but its proprietorship in the Kashmir Province and the Frontier districts was retained by the Maharaja and the landholders, whether they cultivated or only possessed land as *chakdars*, were made tenants-at-will. In very rare cases were they declared to be occupancy tenants. The Kashmir landlords had the right to occupy land so long as they paid the revenue as it fell due but they could neither sell nor mortgage it. The tenants-at-will held land subject to the will of the proprietor, who could eject them at any time. They were of two kinds, namely (i) those who held land direct from a landholder or the State and (ii) those who held land under occupancy tenants of class (i). In Kashmir occupancy tenants consisted mainly of those tenants who held land at the time of Lawrence's settlement and had once been declared by a competent court to be such. In the cities and towns of Kashmir and the frontier

districts people were given the rights of selling or mortgaging the land. In almost the whole of the Jammu Province, excepting the three tehsils of Ramnagar, Basohli and Mirpore, the people were declared to be proprietors of land which was parcelled out to tenants. In these three tehsils landholders were *malguzars* and enjoyed the rights of selling or mortgaging it. This is a glaring instance of the differential treatment that the people of Kashmir Province received under the Dogra Rule–a case of provincial prejudice. This was the first time in the history of Kashmir that people lost proprietorship of their own land.

Maharaja Pratap Singh died in September 1925 A.C. and having no male heir of his own was succeeded by his nephew Raja Hari Singh, the son of Raja Amar Singh. Having known something about him when he worked before becoming the Maharaja in the capacity of the Senior Member of the State Council, educated classes among the people had placed many hopes in the new ruler. But they were disillusioned before long. Soon after his accession to the throne, Hari Singh under the advice of certain short-sighted Rajputs began to form a sort of Rajput oligarchy. Mediocre Rajputs became Heads of various Departments of the State Administration. The Military was exclusively reserved for the Dogras, particularly Rajputs, and more than sixty per cent of the gazetted appointments went to them. This invidious distinction became intolerable and voices, indistinct in the beginning, were raised in protest.

At the start of the year 1929 A.C., Kashmir was already seething with discontent. An intelligent observer like Sir Albion Bannerji deplored such state of affairs. He was disgusted with the unimaginative mind of the rulers, and resigned the post of the Foreign and Political Minister which he had held for over two years. On 15th March, 1929 A.C. his observations on the political, social and economic conditions in the State made before a representative of the Associated Press at Lahore produced a deep effect on the minds of the people of Kashmir. He said :

"Jammu and Kashmir State is labouring under many disadvantages, with a large Mohammedan population absolutely illiterate, labouring under poverty and very low economic conditions of living in

the villages and practically governed like dumb driven cattle. There is no touch between the Government and the people, no suitable opportunity for representing grievances and the administrative machinery itself requires overhauling from top to bottom to bring it up to the modern conditions of efficiency. It has at present little or no sympathy with the people's wants and grievances.

"There is hardly any public opinion in the State. As regards the Press it is practically non-existent with the result that the government is not benefited to the extent that it should be by the impact of healthy criticism".

Sir Albion stated that in the villages of Kashmir people were living very poor lives and the artisans of Kashmir were finding it very difficult to earn a living owing to the unsympathetic attitude of the government. He advised that something should be done early to raise the standard of the masses who had fallen a prey to various abuses and evils owing to grinding poverty. There was no one to listen to this sage advice. Indeed under Hari Singh's rule Kashmiris began to be suppressed in many ways by the Dogras as had not been done before during the time of his predecessors. To the end of Pratap Singh's reign, the headquarters of the Durbar moved seasonally to the two important cities of the State. Jammu used to be the seat of government during the winter and Srinagar was the summer headquarters of the government. But soon after Hari Singh became the Maharaja he fixed his headquarters permanently in Jammu. It was suspected that the arrangements were made, firstly to force Kashmiris to relinquish their jobs and secondly in this way to make their further recruitment in higher offices difficult. It also affected the trade of Kashmir Province to some extent. The political importance of Kashmir Province in general and Srinagar in particular was undoubtedly undermined.

The doors of the Military were closed against the Kashmiris, both Hindus and Muslims. The regiments of the Maharaja were formed either by Hindu Dogras or Muslim Dogras, Kangra Rajputs and Gurkhas and even Punjabi Sikhs from outside the State could have a place in the armed forces of Kashmir and were as a matter of fact employed in the Infantry and

the Rifles. But not the Hindus nor the Muslims of Kashmir, who inherited the glorious martial traditions from such mighty rulers as Lalitaditya and Shahab-ud-Din. "In the army reorganisation I pleaded for the enlistment of a double company of Kashmiris", revealed G.E.C. Wakefield, Hari Singh's Army Minister in his *Recollections*, "but one day His Highness told me that his grandfather, Maharaja Ranbir Singh had raised a whole regiment and, having uniformed and drilled them for six months in Srinagar, gave orders that they should march to Jammu. A deputation of their officers waited upon him with a petition pointing out that, in making arrangements for their march, no provision had been made for police for their protection. The regiment was disbanded". This canard was only an excuse to hide the racial bias of the Dogra Ruler. Very soon after stigmatising the brave Kashmiris in this way, Hari Singh learnt to his cost how heroically the people of the Valley rebelled against him. In his *Recollections* G.E.C. Wakefield admits that "during the riots which occurred in 1931, the wounds of dead Kashmiris were all in front"; so that no fighter for freedom had turned his back to run away. All had cheerfully faced the bullets of the Dogras.

The notorious and infamous case of class prejudice was the one in which all non-Rajputs in the State were shamefully deprived of a right which was bestowed on the Rajputs by orders of the Maharaja. While consolidating the Arms Act in 1940, Hari Singh's Government disarmed the whole nation but allowed the Hindu Rajputs, the members of his own community, to possess, one fire-arm with sufficient ammunition for each family for purposes of religious ritual and worship. Even the most dull-headed man could see that religion was but a cover to arm the pretorean guards in the State against the rising tide of popular movement for the achievement of freedom. Appeals were made to the Maharaja by the Nationalist leaders of Kashmir to abrogate the law but to no purpose.

In the Civil Administration higher appointments were practically reserved for the Punjabis in the reign of Pratap Singh and for the Rajputs when Hari Singh was the Ruler.

On the one hand the economic condition of the people was deteriorating and the masses were becoming poorer and poorer day by day, on the other the Dogra Ruler was pursuing a policy which positively discouraged and suppressed the non-Dogra communities in the country. This created deep resentment and anger in all classes of people in the Valley. Hari Singh and the Dogra Rajputs who composed the oligarchy proved by their behaviour what Fredric Drew had said half a century before. He wrote in 1875 A.C. :

> "Judged of in this capacity—that of agents and instruments of Government—we must allow to the Dogras considerable failing. They have little tact ; they have not the art of conciliating the governed, of treating them in such a way as to attach them. Those who are high in authority have no width enough of view to see that the interests of both governors and governed may be in a great measure coincident. As a rule they are not liked by the dependent nations even to that degree in which, with moderately good management, a ruling race may fairly hope to be liked by its alien subjects".

If all classes of people in the Valley were discontented with the Dogras in 1930 A.C. the Muslims had added reasons for becoming sullen. Firstly they form the large majority (nearly 78 per cent) of the population in the State and 94 per cent in the Valley itself. They were treated more unfairly in every sphere of life than the Kashmir Hindus. There were laws that hit a Muslim very hard. I have already mentioned the Marriage Tax which only a Muslim had to pay on every marriage that took place in his family. This was abolished by Pratap Singh. But there are others which continue to remain on the Statute Book to this day. Such are the Cow-slaughter Law and the Law of Inheritance. According to the former any one (always a Muslim) has to undergo an imprisonment for the offence of killing or injuring a cow or abetting in it. The imprisonment can be up to a period of ten years. This law is barbarous and on many an occasion the entire male population of a village has been tortured by the police when making enquiries and investigations into a case of this nature. According to the Law of Inheritance no apostate from one religion to another is allowed to inherit ancestral property. Islam is a proselytiz-

ing creed. Therefore the Muslims have always considered this law a hindrance in the way of the spread of their religion.

The poverty of the Muslim masses was appalling. Dressed in rags which could hardly hide his body and barefooted, a Muslim peasant presented the appearance rather of a starving beggar than of one who filled the coffers of the State. He worked laboriously in the fields during the six months of the summer to pay the State its revenues and taxes, the officials their *rasum* and the money-lender his interest. Most of them were landless labourers working as serfs of the absentee landlords. They hardly earned, as their share of the produce, enough for more than three months For the rest they had to earn by other means. During the six months they were unemployed and had to go outside the boundaries of the State to work as labourers in big towns and cities of British India. Their lot, as such, was no good, and many of them died every year, unknown, unwept and unsung outside their homes. The disgraceful environments and unkind surroundings in which so many of them died was a slur alike on the people and the government of the country to which they belonged.

Almost the whole brunt of the official corruption had been borne by the Muslim masses. The Police, the Revenue Department, the Forest officials, and even the employees of the Co-operative Societies, had their palms oiled by exaction of the usual *rasum*. Nobody felt any sympathy with this distressing picture of poverty. The channels of human kindness and mercy had run dry. To loot the peasants was no sin; society did not disapprove of it.

In the countryside the Muslim was synonymous with the hewer of wood and drawer of water. All sort of dirty and menial work was to be done by him. A Hindu was respectable in the eyes of the society, and the Muslim, because he was a Muslim, was looked down upon as belonging to an inferior class. Of course, there were throughout the country, a good many well-to-do Muslims possessing money, power and influence. But man for man even they could hardly claim equal rank and recognition with the Hindus of the same class.

DAWN OF MODERNISM

In political, economic and social conditions such as these, it was easy for a Muslim leader to rouse the patriotic and religious sentiments of the whole community against the Dogra rule. It was easy to make a Muslim believe that his ills were entirely due to the Hindu rule under which he lived. It needed some educated young men with burning patriotic zeal to carry this message to the Muslim masses but there were none forthcoming in 1925 when the Dogras suppressed the freedom movement which was sponsored by the signatories to the historic memorial that had been submitted to Lord Reading.

But the Kashmiri Pandits had taken advantage of the presence of schools and the college in Srinagar which were started in 1905 and got themselves educated. By 1925 hundreds of Pandit graduates had left the portals of the college with great hopes to hold posts of responsibility in the administration. In this they were frustrated first by Punjabis and next by Dogra Rajputs who were wielding authority in places of power. Pandits felt aggrieved and disappointed with the policy of the government which excessively favoured the people of the Jammu Province. The policy of provincial discrimination became pronounced and acute in the reign of Hari Singh. For six years from 1925-31 educated Pandit young men carried on a well organised agitation in the outside Press (no freedom of Press was allowed in Kashmir then) against this policy of the Dogras. Pandits not only demanded a due share in the public services of the State ; they demanded freedom of Press and freedom to form associations, establishment of a representative legislature and adequate representation of the people in the administration of the State at the highest level. This movement is known as "Kashmir for Kashmiris" movement. As a result of this, a definition of the term "Hereditary State Subject" was formed and duly passed into a law on the 31st January 1927 A.C. According to this definition "all persons born and residing in the State before the commencement of the reign of Maharaja Gulab Singh Bahadur and also persons who settled therein before the commencement of Samvat 1942 (1885 A.C.) and have since been permanently residing" in the country are

hereditary subjects of the State. An order was issued by the Maharaja forbidding the employment of non-State subjects in public services ; they were even disallowed to purchase any agricultural land. This definition all at once stopped the recruitment of the Punjabis in the services. But it did not equally benefit all the communities residing in the State. With Hari Singh's pro-Dogra policy in operation, the people of Jammu particularly Rajputs got the most of the big jobs while the Pandits were recruited as clerks in offices vacated by the Punjabis. Needless to say that the Muslims were as yet out of the picture.

Their recruitment in offices as subordinate clerks did not appease the Pandits but they could not hit upon any effective weapon of agitation against the government beyond the propaganda in the outside Press. Being a microscopic minority in the population of the Valley the Pandits were not in a position to start any mass movement. They had therefore to remain content with what they did.

But things now began to move quite rapidly inside as well as outside the State. An organisation had been set up in the Punjab by those wealthy and influential Kashmir Muslims who had left their ancient land during the times of the Sikhs to reside in different parts of India. They collected funds and granted scholarships to the poor but promising young Muslims in the Valley to prosecute their studies. A batch of such young men returned to the Valley in 1931 A.C. after receiving higher education in Aligarh and other universities.

In 1927 A.C. the British Government instituted an All White Commission under the presidentship of Sir John Simon to report on the desired and needed constitutional reforms in India. India felt insulted by the formation of such a Commission. On arrival in India the Commission was boycotted and big demonstrations were held against it. Enthusiastic political activities followed those demonstrations which culminated in the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 A.C. under the leadership of the Congress. It was a mass movement on a very huge scale unknown in the annals of the subcontinent. The movement terminated successfully with a pact on important

national problems between Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, and Mahatma Gandhi as the leader of the Congress.

This glorious chapter in the history of the national movement in India could not but produce profound effect on the minds of the Kashmir Muslim young men who were studying in the different universities and had therefore the opportunity to witness the various phases of the movement with their own eyes. Some of them also participated in the Muslim League Session at Allahabad in 1930 A.C. where for the first time Dr. Mohammed Iqbal adumbrated his theory of Panislamism and a separate State for the Muslims of the subcontinent in his presidential address.

Fired with the spark of freedom and enthused with the emotion of Panislamism a batch of young men returned to their home early in 1931 A.C. The echoes and the reverberations of the Civil Disobedience Movement had been heard in the mountains and the valleys of Kashmir in advance of the return of these young men. It had created an atmosphere of defiance to cruel and despotic authority of the alien Dogra rulers. The stage was set with all the paraphernalia ; only the actors were needed to play their parts. Who but these educated and enthusiatic young men were best suited for the task ?

But it took some months for the plot to thicken. Like their Pandit compatriots some years earlier, these Muslim young men, most of whom belonged to the middle class, desired to enter government service. Had those at the helm of affairs been capable of a little foresight and imagination, they would have gladly and readily provided good jobs for these young men who were the first among the Kashmir Muslims to receive higher education. Unfortunately the Punjabi and Dogra Hindu officers could not think that Kashmiris could also be installed in places of power and responsibility, particularly when they belonged to the Muslim community. At best the rulers could be persuaded to bestow a few lower jobs of teachers and clerks on the young educated Muslims. But here too a difficulty arose. By 1931 A.C. Kashmiri Pandits had entered the offices in large numbers

as clerks. Following in the footsteps of the Punjabis and Dogras, the Pandits, by hook or by crook made it difficult for the Muslim young men to get even these subordinate jobs. Not without a struggle did a few of the young men succeed in securing some humble positions for themselves. Among the fortunate few was one Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah who, though an M. Sc. of the Aligarh University, became a junior teacher in a Srinagar High School on Rs. 60 p.m. though many of the gazetted officers in various departments of the State were mere matriculates and one of the departmental heads, a Dogra Rajput, was not even literate as he used to sign the official documents with his thumb impression.

In summer of 1929 A.C., a representation had been made to the Maharaja by a few moderate Muslim politicians about the inadequate representation of their community in the State services. A private understanding was arrived at that about 50 per cent vacancies should be reserved for the Muslims. The assurance was never implemented with the result that resentment grew day by day.

The educated young men began to organise themselves. They formed a party informally because there existed no freedom of association. They opened a reading room in Srinagar where lengthy discussions were held among members of the party as to how they should get their grievances redressed. All members of the party were young and inexperienced. Hardly could any one of them imagine that the role which forces beyond their control were making them play had a great historical significance. They were anxious to secure suitable and honourable places in State services. Beyond that limited goal their ambitions or aspirations did not proceed. A revolution or even a drastic change in the political, economic and social structure of the county was beyond their imagination and expectation. Yet, as subsequent events proved, however unwillingly or hesitatingly they were forced to be the weapons in the hands of times which had ripened for changes and developments unprecedented in the history of the Dogra rule.

After a good deal of deliberation the young men decided

to approach the State Cabinet which was governing the country in absence of the Maharaja who had gone to London to attend the Round Table Conference. A deputation of two members was selected to meet the Ministers who condescended to grant an interview. One of the members was Sheikh Abdullah on whose shoulders thus the mantle of leadership fell at an early stage of the movement.

The outcome of the interview was disappointing. The Cabinet refused to reserve jobs for the Muslims if they could not get them through competition with the candidates of other communities. This discouragement could have been sufficient to break the back-bone of the Muslim young men and nip the movement in the bud as it had done on many previous occasions in case of Pandit young men but the times had changed. The Muslim young men might lack the courage to take up the struggle but forces working in the country would not let them sleep.

The disaffection among all sections of Kashmir people was growing and had indeed reached the highest pitch. The Punjab Muslims of different shades of opinion such as Ahrars and Ahmadis, were doing enormous propaganda against the Dogra rule. The Maharaja had flamboyantly delivered pro-Congress speeches at the Round Table Conference enraging his imperialist masters. Forgetting his position as a vassal he had also been rather haughty towards the British Resident ever since he ascended the throne. The whole atmosphere was surcharged; only a match was needed to be applied to the gun-powder to explode. This was unconsciously done by the Muslim young men soon after their moderate demands had been turned down by the State Cabinet.

It was clear to everybody that something was going to happen soon. No body knew who was driving the public mind but that it was being driven towards something inexpressible appeared to be a certainty. A novel drama was being enacted on a national scale and every Kashmiri was taking part in it, however humbly, however unconsciously; yet every one including the Muslim young men thought that others unknown to

him were more concerned in this affair than he. It was an amazing, almost mystical, terrorising and shuddering experience. It was an elemental upsurge.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ELEMENTAL UPSURGE

I have already noted the unfortunate and narrow-minded attitude of the Pandit government employees towards the educated Muslim young men. That was one of the main causes which had given a communal bias to the tone and temper of the propaganda which the young men were carrying on in their limited circle. The surcharged atmosphere now prevailing in the country unbalanced the Pandit community. They became suspicious, terror-stricken and demoralised. Despite their glorious part in the Freedom Movement throughout the course of the history and their manifold grievances against the Dogra rule, nothing to say of their demand for freedom of Press and establishment of Constitutional Government, they now began to look upon the Maharaja as their protector and refuge. They became the defenders of the powers that were and thus came into clash with the dynamic times. It is a tragedy that even up to this day the majority of the Pandits have continued to maintain such an unhealthy and dangerous attitude towards the Freedom Movement.

In the beginning of 1931 A.C. the Lahore Muslim Press started a violent and venomous campaign against the Hindu Maharaja and his administration. Newspapers containing articles written in words of fire were published and sent by thousands into the State. In the name of the Holy Prophet and Islam, the followers of the Faith were asked to sacrifice everything for the cause of the community and join the struggle which it was evident to everyone was coming with great speed. This campaign under the circumstances already mentioned created terrific effects upon the minds of the Muslims in the Valley.

Under the stress of the times people in the State had become very active. Groups, bands and parties were formed

everywhere without the knowledge of each other. In Srinagar the Reading Room Party was gradually forced to the forefront in the Muslim politics. They had the good fortune to enlist the sympathies and even active co-operation of the two religious heads, the *Mir Waizes*, for their agitation. Among Pandits the *Yuvak Sabha*, a religious organisation jumped into politics. Prem Nath Bazaz was chosen as its President.

A few incidents occurred in different parts of the State inconsequential in themselves, but quite dangerous in the political climate which now existed in the land. There was a case in Jammu of disrespect to the Holy Quran and another case of interference in the *Khutba* of a *Maulvi* on *ID* day. A third incident took place in village Digore when Muslims were refused permission to offer prayers on a certain piece of land. Though prompt action was taken by the authorities to set the matters right nothing pleased the Muslims and a cry of "Islam in danger" was raised throughout the length and breadth of the land. This made the movement State-wide.

Big gatherings of the Muslims began to be held at different religious places particularly in the Jama Masjid, at Srinagar, in which speeches condemning the Hindu government and its officials were delivered by all those who could use the tongue on a platform. One such public meeting was called in the Khanqah-i-Maula on 21st June, 1931, to elect the representatives of the Kashmir Muslims who were expected to submit the grievances and demands of the community to the Maharaja at the suggestion of G.E.C. Wakefield, Political Minister. Jammu Muslims had already elected their four representatives among whom Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas was one. The Muslims of Srinagar nominated seven prominent workers as their spokesmen. They were Khwaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl, Mir Waiz Usuf Shah, Mir Waiz Atiq Ullah Hamadani, Aga Sayyid Hussain Shah Jalali, Khwaja Ghulam Ahmad Ashai, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and Munshi Shahab-ud-Din.

At the end of the Khanqah-i-Maula meeting, an outsider Muslim Abdul Qadir, an ugly-looking, short-statured butler of an European, delivered a violent speech advocating massacre

of Hindus. He was arrested by the Police next day and ordered to be tried in the central jail. On 13th July before the trial started, a large crowd gathered outside the prison walls. When the Sessions Judge and other officials arrived the mob became uncontrollable and some of the Muslims forced their way into the outer compound of the jail. The District Magistrate, who had also come by this time, ordered the arrest of some of the ring-leaders of the mob. Out of all the officials present–and their number was large–not even one went forward to the crowd to reason with it and pacify it. The Official Enquiry Commission which investigated into the affair subsequently have deplored this attitude of the officials and recorded their opinion that "the crowd ought at least to have been told by the District Magistrate that it was a criminal gathering and ran the great risk of a clash with the authority". The arrests highly excited the crowd who demanded the release of their leaders and not obtaining it became restive and threw stones. Telephone lines were furiously shaken and subsequently cut. Attempts were made to set fire to the Police Lines attached to the jail and their contents were thrown out. At this stage firing was ordered. According to the official report ten men were killed at the spot and several wounded. But it was found on the 26th July that actually twenty-one persons died in all as a result of the incident.

After the firing the matters took a very grave turn. The officials became greatly nervous but could not leave the jail premises. A large part of the crowd carried the dead bodies on *charpoys* and went towards the city in the form of a procession. They carried a banner of blood in front and raised slogans. Public opinion among the Muslims had by this time crystallised on the point that the government and the Hindus were inseparable and the one stood for the other. Almost all the officials were Hindus and the Maharaja was a Hindu. So the responsibility for the actions of the government must be shared by the Hindus. The jail firing which killed several Muslims created great resentment in the mob mind against the Hindus. So when the procession reached Maharaj Ganj, a busy trade centre of

the city, Hindu shops which had been closed owing to panic after hearing of the jail incident, were broken open and looted. A serious rioting followed not only at Maharaj Ganj but also in several parts of the city, notably Vicharnag and Naushehra, the city of Bud Shah. Hundreds of Hindu houses and shops were denuded of their contents and the inmates badly handled. Three Hindus were murdered and 163 wounded. The rioters held the northern part of the city for three hours until the Military came and occupied it. Firing was again resorted to that afternoon at Nawab Bazar where one man was killed. Over 300 rioters were arrested, out of whom about 217 were subsequently released for want of sufficient evidence against them.

Historically and politically the 13th July, 1931, is the most important day in the annals of contemporary Kashmir. From this day the struggle for independence and freedom in the most modern sense started openly. Doubtless in 1931, the struggle was aggressively communal outwardly but those who had not kept their eyes shut could see that it was in essence the struggle of a victimised and enslaved people against the despotic rule. It was sooner or later bound to proceed on the right track. Prem Nath Bazaz and a number of Kashmiri Pandits soon realized that the movement was spontaneous and expressed the inner urge of the down-trodden, tyrannised and suppressed millions under the autocratic alien Dogra rule. They also realized that it would be suicidal to oppose it and instead of showing any hostility towards it, it was the paramount duty of all patriots to support it, nay contribute their humble share to make it successful. Undoubtedly the progressive Pandits felt deeply pained and grieved to see that contrary to the traditions and culture of Kashmir, the movement was conducted on narrow communal basis as had never been done before in any period of their long history. They also realized that it must be quickly re-orientated on healthier and secular lines on which composite Kashmir culture had been reared during many centuries in the past. But here too the Pandit patriots were of the opinion that it was useless and unfair to lay the blame entirely on the shoulders of the Muslims. They held the

view that Kashmir Hindus were equally responsible for the emergence of communalism as a strong factor in body politic of the State. They therefore decided to attempt to drastically change the attitude of the Pandit community and meanwhile to become critical supporters of the freedom movement started by the Muslims. They believed such a policy would produce favourable reactions in the Muslim mind. With this viewpoint the progressive Pandits started the uphill task of secularising Kashmir politics with what results the remaining part of this book will tell.

The incident of the 13th July shook the whole State including the Administration ; it unnerved the Maharaja. An official commission under the presidentship of Sir Barjore Dalal, Chief Justice, was set up to enquire into the causes of the happenings. The enquiry was boycotted by the Muslims.

Immediately after the jail incident, most of the chosen representatives of the State Muslims including Abdullah and Abbas were arrested and kept in Hari Parbat Fort. It proved no remedy to restore law and order in the State. As a matter of fact it added fuel to the fire of wild excitement which held the people in its grip. As it was, 13th July saw the beginning of the gigantic force behind the mass movement.

The country from one end to the other was now a big mass of discontent and unrest. Law and order remained only in name and the instructions of the authorities were publicly flouted at every place. Complete and spontaneous *hartal* was observed by the Muslim shopkeepers throughout the Kashmir Province. The few Hindu shops also remained closed owing to the fear of loot. Innumerable mass meetings were held to protest against the policy of the government particularly the arrest of the leaders. Big processions were taken out and demonstrations held in all towns and important villages in which men, women and children participated in large numbers. The situation became explosive and dangerous.

Finding that the Cabinet was unable to grapple with the political problem, the Maharaja discharged two of his ministers, G.E.C. Wakefield and P.K. Wattal, and installed a Hindu

Jagirdar, Raja Hari Kishen Kaul, as his Prime Minister. The new Premier realized before he was in office for many days that he could not restore normal conditions unless and until he released the Muslim leaders interned in Hari Parbat Fort. The leaders were set at liberty by the end of July on furnishing an undertaking that they would not deliver any speeches which might create communal bitterness.

The successful termination of the movement which resulted in the release of its leaders gave a great fillip to the activities of the Muslims. It strengthened the agitation against the Dogra Government. The representatives chosen some days before the 13th July became the confirmed and recognised leaders of the Muslims in the State.

Because of its communal colour the Freedom Movement of the Kashmir people remained for a long time under the direction and virtual control of the Punjab Muslim leaders who had formed a small body known as "Kashmir Committee" to advise those at the helm of affairs in the State. Under instructions of this Committee, August 14 was observed by Muslims throughout India as "Kashmir Day" when meetings were held and resolutions passed sympathising with the victims of the firings on 13th July. The "Kashmir Day" was observed inside the State as well on a big scale. Through the intercession of one Punjabi Muslim leader, Nawab Mehr Shah, His Highness instructed his government to enter into an agreement with the representatives who had been chosen by the Muslims in the beginning of July. It was done to mollify the majority community and to find a *modus operandi* in Kashmir politics when its old basis had been altogether shattered by the elemental upsurge. This agreement was called Temporary Truce. According to it the Muslims undertook to stop the agitation, deliver no speeches against the government and any class of people and remain loyal to the Maharaja. The Government on their behalf undertook to suspend all measures adopted for suppression of this agitation. This truce was wholly unacceptable to the people because it did not touch any of the basic political, economic or social problems. When the provisions of the agreement were announ-

ced on 28th August in a mass meeting at Jama Masjid, Muslims raised cat calls and denounced the truce. The leaders naturally became uneasy and wanted under one pretext or another to come into clash with the authorities. Now and then they delivered speeches which were objectionable in law. As a consequence some of the leaders, including Abdullah, were arrested on the 24th of September. Almost immediately on hearing the news Kashmiris rose in rebellion like the proverbial one man. Next day it became evident that the situation had become grave. Thousands of people had collected at Jama Masjid who, on being asked to disperse, became violent. The police fired at them killing three and wounding several.

The 24th of September, 1931, is another important day in the history of Kashmir. On this day, in spite of their leaders, the masses asserted themselves. They, in spite of their leaders again, proved that the struggle was political and non-communal and directed entirely against the administration of the State and was in no manner against non-Muslims. Large crowds of Muslims with all kinds of crude weapons particularly the one known in Kashmiri as *narchu* in their hands paraded the streets brandishing their arms. There is evidence to believe that thousands of people came from the countryside to participate in these demonstrations. According to the official report it was impossible for any policeman to go out into the streets. Throughout the city the policemen remained inside their quarters and police control was for the time being entirely suspended. It is highly significant that not a single Hindu–man, woman or child–was molested by the mob on this day. On the other hand, there is reliable evidence to show that members of the mob furnished instances of great chivalry and real heroism in escorting some Hindu women. Muslims voluntarily accompanied the women to their homes. Even though misguided by the upper classes, the Muslim fighters for freedom instinctively followed the age-old traditions of their noble culture. Evidently the masses had not lost sight of their goal. They were giving a demonstration of their strength and pointing to their real ambitions and aspirations. I do not believe that this demonstration had been planned by

the Muslim leaders. It was spontaneous. It was a protest simultaneously against the unwanted, tyrannical and despotic Dogra rule as well as against the selfish, bourgeoisie leadership. While the Hindu upper classes thought that this gigantic and terrible demonstration was the work of the Muslim upper classes, the latter were themselves frightfully taken aback on finding the magnitude of the demonstration. Muslim leaders hurriedly held a meeting at the residence of Saad-ud-Din Shawl, one of the representatives, and five or six of them applied for an interview with His Highness, which was granted. They dissociated all the representatives from the gigantic demonstration and explained their position before their august sovereign. So long as the Muslim masses were under the control of the bourgeoisie leadership and faithfully carried out their behests, the leaders used them to bring pressure upon the monarchy; but when the people acted spontaneously and in their own interests, the leadership sought refuge in royalty. This was another effect of the class mentality, and proof enough that the leadership was afraid of leading the masses.

As a direct consequence of the treachery of the leadership, on 24th September, the Maharaja passed an ordinance on the lines of the ordinance which had been promulgated in Burma to put down an organised and armed rebellion in that country. The city was handed over to the military control and the civil administration was suspended. We need not go into the atrocities of the Dogra Military. Suffice it to say that they misbehaved themselves in every conceivable manner. When the details of atrocities reached other places in the Valley there was restlessness everywhere. Fire had to be opened in Anantnag town killing twenty-one people and injuring twenty-seven. Some of those killed were of less than ten years of age. In Shopian matters became even worse and the town was handed over to the military control with the inevitable results. "I have nothing but condemnation to record regarding the facts that the people were forced to stand up and shout slogans on occasions when the police and troops passed by and in many cases they were beaten if they delayed in doing so", observed Mr. Middleton who

was appointed by the Maharaja to report on the disturbances.

Despite severe repression the Muslims continued to struggle and the Maharaja, realising that the resistance was strong, thought it advisable to change his policy. So on the 5th October, 1931, he issued a proclamation withdrawing the ordinance and other emergency measures. All political prisoners were also released forthwith.

As a result of the events in Kashmir Province, unrest in Jammu was simmering for a considerable time. The Muslims of Jammu are nearer to Punjab Muslims than the Muslims of the Valley. To demonstrate their sympathies with State Muslims, the Ahrars sent *jathas* of volunteers to Jammu with the intention of creating disturbances and disaffection against the government. Nearly 4500 such volunteers entered the State boundaries in the month of October. Encouraged by their presence, Jammu Muslims started political demonstrations. It became difficult for the State Government to deal with the situation and the Maharaja requested the Viceroy for help. On 4th November the British troops arrived in Jammu from Jullundur cantonment which effectively suppressed the local disturbances there.

But now the unrest spread to the Mirpur district. It assumed a menacing communal-cum-economic shape. It was a war of Muslim peasantry against the Hindu money-lenders. Whole villages were burnt down and entire buildings razed to the ground in the greater part of the tehsils of Mirpur, Kotli and Rajouri. Economic and religious factors played equal parts in this disturbance and for the time being it was difficult to separate them. British troops were at once despatched to the disturbed areas but due to bad roads it took much time to quell lawlessness.

In his proclamation on 5th October the Maharaja gave an assurance that "if any section of my subjects desires to submit any reasonable request, they will receive my sympathetic consideration". Accordingly, memorials were submitted immediately by the representatives of the Muslims, Hindus of all shades of opinion, Sikhs, Rajputs, and Kashmiri Pandits in which

various grievances particular to individual communities as also those they had as citizens of the State were laid down

In their memorials the non-Muslims generally stressed the need for protection of life and property and of good and strong government. Sikhs wanted "thirty-three per cent share in services, a minister in the Cabinet and one-third of the posts from highest to the lowest". The Kashmiri Pandits demanded "fair field and no favour in matter of grant of services; the doors of military services should be thrown open to them and employment should be provided for their educated unemployed". The Kashmiri Pandits further observed that "they were as anxious as any other community for the introduction of Constitutional Government, but they were equally anxious that the body politic should not be corrupted by the canker of communalism". The memorial of Rajputs was more a sermon on resolute government than a request.

The memorial submitted by the Muslims was an elaborate document. In it the representatives of the community told the Maharaja that "no single man without the help and co-operation of others could look after the welfare of a vast territory like Jammu and Kashmir and the people could not enjoy peace and prosperity unless they were afforded suitable opportunity to influence and criticise the work of the executive responsible for the observance of such laws". So it was necessary that "an immediate assurance be given to the people to the effect that in future they would be treated in accordance with some definite constitution and a declaration may be immediately made that your Highness' Government will be based on constitutional principles". An attempt was made in this memorial even to visualise this constitution and according to it "every citizen of the State should be eligible for election to the Assembly. Seventy per cent members should be elected, Ministers should be responsible to the Ruler, but if seventy per cent of the members of the Legislature pass a resolution to the effect that they have no confidence in a certain Minister, that Minister should be forthwith relieved of his duty". Of course the Muslims wanted the strength of their population to be reflected in the numerical strength of the

Assembly as well as the Ministry. The memorialists demanded a declaration of fundamental rights which would guarantee "perfect religious freedom, freedom of assemblage, freedom of speech, freedom of Press, and equality of rights and treatment for all State subjects in all respects". In the matter of recruitment to State services, the Muslims demanded that "seventy per cent of these should be given to them in all grades, and the basis of recruitment should be the minimum qualifications".

On 12th November 1931, the Maharaja appointed a commission consisting of four non-official members presided over by an European officer, B. J. Glancy of the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India. The four non-official members were made up of G. A. Ashai, one Muslim and Prem Nath Bazaz, one Hindu, from the Kashmir Province, and Ghulam Abbas, one Muslim, and Lok Nath Sharma, one Hindu, from the Jammu Province each nominated by their respective communities. The function of the Commission was "to enquire into and report on the various complaints of a religious or a general nature contained in the memorials" and "also such complaints as might be directly laid before the Commission".

Reactionary and short-sighted Hindus disapproved and disliked the appointment of the Commission because they thought that it indicated that the Muslim movement was strong and irrestible. They brought heavy pressure to bear upon the Hindu members to resign in the hope that without their participation the Commission would not be able to function. Unhappily Lok Nath Sharma surrendered before these powerful forces of reaction but Prem Nath Bazaz would not yield. The latter was firmly of the opinion that here was a chance for the liberal and far-sighted Hindus to influence the Muslim movement and divert it to the right channels and bring it on a saner path. He therefore refused to respond to the clamour and fully and frankly participated in the deliberations of the Commission till the very last day. This created a well marked rift in the ranks of the Kashmiri Pandit political workers. All the reactionary and communal-minded Pandits have ever since arrayed on one side under *The Yuvak Sabha* (also called

Kashmiri Pandits' Conference) to oppose the legitimate aspirations of the Muslims ; on the other side has been the band of workers who agree with Prem Nath Bazaz that the progress and prosperity of Kashmiri Pandits is synonymous with the complete political, social and economic freedom of Kashmir and the liberation of the Muslim masses.

The report of the Grievances Enquiry (Glancy) Commission was published in April, 1932. It is a document of great historical importance, as it established beyond doubt that real grievances existed which needed redress. The main recommendations of the Commission were readily accepted by His Highness. According to these all religious buildings of the Muslims in possession of the Government were restored to them, the Hindu Law of Inheritance was allowed to remain as it was found by the Commission that no religious grievance of the Muslims could be admitted on this account. It recommended that the educational development should be strenuously taken in hand especially in regard to primary schools. An increase in the number of Muslim teachers and the appointment of a Special Officer for supervising and promoting Muslim education was also recommended. In the matter of distribution of government services the following recommendations were made :

(a) Minimum qualifications should not be pitched unnecessarily high.

(b) All vacancies should be effectively advertised and similar action should be taken as regards all scholarships intended to provide equipment in government services.

(c) Effective measures should be taken to provide a system of appointment and a machinery for supervising that system in such a way as to prevent the due interests of any community from being neglected.

Dealing with land problem the Commission observed :

"Proprietary rights should be granted in all respects to all lands of which the ownership is retained by the State and right of occupancy is enjoyed by the private persons. The grant of proprietary rights would be greatly appreciated and would make for increased contentment and stability".

The poor peasant and his immediate problems also were not totally ignored. Said the Commission :

"*Kahcharai* (Grazing Tax) should be forthwith suspended in certain

specified areas, and action should be taken to see that the demand does not press too heavily on other portions of the State. All possible care should be taken to see that the existing rights of the agriculturists are not in any way impaired by privileges conferred on other classes. The benefit of concession granted to the agriculturists at the time of *Raj Tilak* ceremony (His Highness' accession) should be fully secured to them. Strenuous endeavours should be made to put an end to all unauthorised exactions. Decentralisation of power is desirable in many directions in order that Ministers and Heads of Departments may have time to supervise more effectively the officers under their control".

As regards *begar*, which was still practised by officials, the Commission recommended :

"His Highness' orders in respect of *Kar-i-Sarkar* (Labour requisitioned for State purposes) should be strictly enforced and payment should be made at proper rates for all services rendered".

And lastly about unemployment and industrialisation the Commission said :

"The promotion of industries should receive the earliest attention of the State authorities. Industrial developments are at the present time of the utmost importance as it is highly desirable to provide an outlet for employment".

CHAPTER EIGHT

ATTEMPTS TO SECULARISE POLITICS

WITH the publication of the report of the Grievances Enquiry Commission as well as of other reports by B.J. Glancy which he submitted to the Maharaja in May 1932, regarding the constitutional reforms and freedom of Press and Platform, it became widely known that all State Hindus did not oppose the Muslim demands and that at least a section of the Kashmiri Pandits whom Prem Nath Bazaz represented were anxious to see that the legitimate grievances of the State Muslims are redressed and a progressive form of government is established in the State. This created a moderating and sobering influence on the Muslim mind. A few young Muslim leaders including Abdullah began to think of re-orientating the Muslim politics on broader, healthier and non-communal lines. Abdullah and Prem Nath Bazaz met only two months later on a historic afternoon in July 1932 in the Chashma Shahi Garden to thrash out the problem. This meeting proved to be of a great significance. The decisions taken in it by the two after a frank, detailed and heart-to-heart discussion of the basic issues, have considerably influenced the State politics. It was in this meeting that Abdullah and Bazaz firmly resolved that the Kashmir Freedom Movement will be conducted on secular, progressive and democratic lines. Both of them promised to work together till the goal of complete freedom was achieved.

After the Chashma Shahi meeting Abdullah and Bazaz met frequently to review progress of their mission during the succeeding months. Meanwhile unfavourable wind began to blow in the State. The reactionary Hindus considered the various Glancy Reports as a challenge to their stranglehold in State politics. They could easily see that their vested interests were being demolished and if the process was allowed to conti-

nue before long there would be a popular government in the country which in other words would mean the rule of the Muslims — the majority community in the State. These reactionaries therefore tried their best to frighten the Government so that it might desist from becoming just towards the Muslims. Public meetings were held in which irresponsible and provocative speeches were delivered by Hindu leaders. This caused a riot in Srinagar during October and passions ran very high. It was surely not a suitable climate for introducing secular politics in the country. Though therefore the implementation of the proposals drawn in the Chashma Shahi Garden was postponed indefinitely, Abdullah and Prem Nath Bazaz continued to keep in close touch with each other.

By now it was evident that the Muslims needed an organisation to constitutionally fight for a representative government and to safeguard their communal interests. Accordingly the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was founded and its first session was held in Srinagar on the 15th, 16th and 17th October 1932. This Conference remained in existence till June 1939. Its history is nothing but the record of the struggle of the middle and upper class Muslims for the achievement of their class rights.

On the last day of October 1932, Prem Nath Bazaz started the first newspaper, *The Daily Vitasta,* in the Kashmir Province to popularise the ideal of secular politics and fight for the establishment of a responsible government in the State. This journal did not live long mainly owing to the hostility of the reactionary Hindus who tried to suppress it by every means at their command. Nevertheless the daily rendered great service to the cause of Nationalism during those early days of the Freedom Movement. Influenced by the writings of progressive Pandit intellectuals, published in the columns of *The Vitasta*, the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference constituted a sub-committee early in 1933 to find out ways and means of uniting Hindus and Muslims. This sub-committee could not function but it indicates that the idea of joint action in politics had taken birth.

An agitation was started by the Muslim Conference leaders in winter 1934 on the basis of complaints that the government had inordinately delayed implementation of the constitutional reforms proposed by B.J. Glancy in his report and that the Muslims were not given adequate representation in State services. The Working Committee suspended the Constitution of the Conference and appointed Ghulam Abbas as "Dictator" with the purpose of either getting the grievances of Muslims redressed by correspondence with the Government or by launching a movement of civil disobedience. Abbas prepared his memorandum to the Government in consultation with Abdullah and Bazaz. It is noteworthy that while discussing the constitutional reforms for the State in the memorandum, Ghulam Abbas demanded that there should be a system of joint electorates for the proposed Legislative Assembly, a thing which has always been hateful to Muslim communalists.

The Government did not favourably consider the proposals put forward by the "Dictator" in his memorandum. Abbas too acted in haste by challenging the authorities either to accept his demands or suffer consequences. A clash became inevitable. He was arrested and many others with him but not Abdullah.

While Abbas and others were behind the bars, the Maharaja granted a Constitution providing a Legislative Assembly for the people. The first session of the Assembly was held in autumn of 1934 at Srinagar. High hopes were raised with the introduction of this reform but the reality soon dawned upon the people that the Assembly was powerless. Nevertheless it served a good purpose in that the elected representatives of Muslims and Hindus were brought together on the floor of the House where they began to understand and appreciate each other's point of view. They also began to realize that most of the basic problems were common to both. Astonishment descended upon an unexpectant outside world when it read in newspapers in autumn 1936 that the entire block of the elected members, with the solitary exception of one Amar Nath Kak, walked out of the Kashmir Assembly as a protest against the unsympathetic attitude which

was persistently maintained by the government towards the public demands.

Early in 1935 Abdullah and Prem Nath Bazaz felt that the time had arrived to make the first move in the implementation of their scheme for re-orientating Kashmir politics on secular lines. They were however cautious not to precipitate the matters. On 1st August, 1935, they jointly started a weekly journal *The Hamdard* in Urdu to popularise the ideology and to lay the foundation of progressive Nationalism in the State. The inauguration of the first issue of the journal was performed by Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew in a big public meeting at Hazuri Bagh, Srinagar. From the very start *The Hamdard* attempted to blaze a new trail in the affairs of the State. It was a standard-bearer of democracy and unity of all Kashmiris without any consideration of caste or creed they professed. Often it published articles bitterly and frankly critical of orthodox views. Its readers came from all classes and communities. In a country where all other papers were either thoroughly Muslim or totally Hindu in their outlook *The Hamdard* stood alone, a class by itself. It was mainly through the sober, thoughtful and inspiring writings of this weekly that the Muslim Conference was converted into the National Conference in 1939 A. C.

On 8th May 1936 the Muslim Conference Party observed a Responsible Government Day throughout the length and breadth of the State. An appeal had been made by Abdullah, President of the Conference, to non-Muslims to participate in the function. This did not go in vain. For, at many places, notably Srinagar, Poonch and Jammu, presidents of the public meetings held in this connection as also the principal speakers at them were either Hindus or Sikhs.

A party of young men with some influence and under the guidance of Prem Nath Bazaz came into existence in 1936 in the form of Kashmir Youth League which believed "in the equality of all people in the State" and held that "there was no distinction between young men or women on the basis of religious beliefs they professed". Such activities and developments proved

conducive and helpful to the growth of secular politics and it enabled the leaders of the Muslim Conference to advocate the re-orientation of their party on more rationalist basis.

In his Presidential Address to the sixth annual session of the Muslim Conference on the 26th March, 1938, Abdullah observed:

> "Like us the large majority of Hindus and Sikhs in the State have immensely suffered at the hands of the irresponsible government. They are also steeped in deep ignorance, have to pay large taxes and are in debt and starving. Establishment of responsible government is as much a necessity for them as for us. Sooner or later these people are bound to join our ranks. No amount of propaganda can keep them away from us".

Again:

> "The main problem therefore now before us is to organise joint action and a united front against the forces that stand in our way in the achievement of our goal. This will require re-christening our organisation as a non-communal political body and introducing certain amendments in its constitution and its rules".

He added:

> "I reiterate today what I have said so often. Firstly, we must end communalism by ceasing to think in terms of Muslims and non-Muslims when discussing our political problems. Secondly there must be universal suffrage on the basis of joint electorates. Without these two, democracy is lifeless".

Mark an admission :—

> "You complain that the Hindus belonging to the vested interests are reactionary and stand in the way of our progress. But have we not had the same experience in the case of capitalist Muslims also? It is significant as well as hopeful that in spite of many difficulties in their way some non-Muslims have co-operated with us though their number is very small. Their sincerity and moral courage make us feel their strength. We must therefore open our doors to all such Hindus and Sikhs, who like ourselves, believe in the freedom of their country from the shackles of an irresponsible rule".

Abdullah placed a resolution embodying his views before the Working Committee on 28 June 1938. There was an opposition from some members including Ghulam Mohammed Bakshi and Mohammed Afzal Beg. But after a heated discussion for about fifty-two hours, the Committee adopted the resolution. It said:

"Whereas in the opinion of the Working Committee the time has now come when all the progressive forces in the country should be rallied under one banner to fight for the achievement of responsible government, the Working Committee recommends to the General Council that in the forthcoming session of the Conference the name and constitution of the organization be so altered and amended that all such people who desire to participate in this political struggle may easily become members of the Conference irrespective of their caste, creed or religion".

It appears that the Dogra Government headed by N. Gopalaswami Ayyengar, who had been the Prime Minister of the State since 1936, felt uneasy at this new trend of affairs in the politics of the State. The authorities began to give pin-pricks to the people by gagging prominent workers and by imposing other restrictions on their activities. Early in August it became evident that a conflict between the people and the Government was in the offing. It seemed doubtful if the Muslim Conference would be allowed to hold its plenary session to ratify the resolution passed by the Working Committee to change the name and the constitution of the organisation. A manifesto was therefore prepared and published on the 29th August under the signatures of twelve prominent Hindu, Muslim and Sikh leaders of the national bent of mind.

We need not discuss the contents of this manifesto known as the "National Demand" in detail. Its significance lies in the fact that the signatories had made a declaration that the movement was nation-wide and not confined to any community or section of the public and that "all classes of the people had begun participating in it with the fullest consciousness of the issues it involves". The ultimate goal of the movement according to these leaders was "to bring about complete change in the social and political outlook of the people and to achieve responsible government under the aegis of the Maharaja". These sentiments showed a remarkable change that had taken place in the minds of the people of Kashmir, at any rate, among a large section of the political workers. For that reason the struggle that followed was unique and unparalleled in the contemporary political history of Kashmir. The Freedom Movement had come out of

the mire of communalism and was shining in all its brilliance on the high pedestal of Nationalism.

The adoption and the publication of the manifesto proved to be a signal for measuring the swords between the fighters for Kashmir's freedom on the one side and the alien and autocratic Dogra Rule on the other. The fight started on the last day of August. The policy of severest repression was launched by the Government. Hundreds of leaders and workers were arrested including Abdullah, Abbas and Bazaz. Many Kashmir Pandits fought shoulder to shoulder with Muslims and suffered equally with them. It was a glorious chapter in the history of the Freedom Movement of Kashmir.

Repression only strengthened the forces of nationalism in the State. Realising this, N. Gopalaswami Ayyengar released all imprisoned leaders and workers including the signatories to the National Demand by the end of February 1939. A special session of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was held at Srinagar on the 10th June of that year. It was attended by 176 delegates representing all districts. The resolution which had been adopted by the Working Committee on the 28th June 1938 was moved in the open session. Some of the delegates including Abbas privately expressed fears about the future of the political movement after the change was effected. They were not sure that the State Hindus would sincerely and whole-heartedly support the freedom struggle. A meeting was held in which Abdullah, Abbas and Bazaz discussed these doubts and fears. It was obvious that the large majority of the State Hindus would prefer Dogra rule to a democratic government. But that the re-orientation would immensely strengthen the forces of freedom and enable Hindu and Sikh progressives and patriots to participate in the struggle was also clear. Muslim leaders feared that the National Conference would become a hand-maid of the Indian Congress. But Abdullah, Abbas and Bazaz solemnly declared that it would be most harmful and dangerous to bring the Kashmir Freedom Movement under the influence of any outside organisation. It was decided that the organisation should keep aloof from the Indian National Cong-

ress as well as the Muslim League. On these assurances misgivings of Abbas were allayed and he gave his fullest support to the resolution in the plenary session of the Conference. "The garb in the shape of Muslim Conference (for the State politics) has become outworn and threadbare", declared Ghulam Abbas in the open session speaking on the resolution and addressing the delegates. He added : "Now we are in need of a nationalist guise. The time has come when we should discard the old and decayed mantle and tear it to pieces". Another top-ranking Muslim leader from Jammu, Allah Rakha Sagar, spoke in the same strain by advising the delegates that "Nationalism is the cry of the time and those who do not heed it, will repent in future". The resolution was passed, the over-whelming majority of delegates supporting it ; only three hands were raised in opposition. Thus the morning of the 11th June 1939, when the historic decision was taken after deliberating over it for a whole night, sounded the death-knell of the Muslim Conference and heralded the day with the happy news of the birth of the National Conference in its place.

CHAPTER NINE

NATIONAL CONFERENCE LED ASTRAY

THE 11th of June 1939 was a red letter day in the history of the Freedom Movement in Kashmir. The great desire of those who wanted to re-orientate State politics on secular lines had been fulfilled. The tremendous labour of Abdullah and Bazaz since that afternoon in July 1932 when they first met at the Cheshma Shahi Garden to draw up a plan for Freedom Movement right up to the very hour when the resolution was adopted in the Special Session, had borne fruit. The first milestone in the journey towards the goal of liberation had been reached. It was now possible to adapt the freedom struggle to the basic principles and traditions of the composite culture of Kashmir Nationalism seeds of which had been sown during the days of Bud Shah and carefully nurtured by all Kashmir patriots throughout the long period of five centuries till the purchase of the Valley by the Dogras. The way had now been opened to liberate Kashmir from the alien rule as well as to secure economic, political and social freedom of the teeming millions of the land. But the task before the National Conference was a tedious one; the path was beset with manifold difficulties. For, it was easier to form the National Conference than to make it an effective weapon in the hands of the people for the achievement of the freedom of Kashmir.

The re-christening of the Muslim Conference had taken place at a time when Indian politics were undergoing changes of far-reaching importance. Under the provisions of the Government of India Act 1935, autonomy had been introduced in British India and Congress Governments had come to power in all the Provinces except the Punjab and Bengal as a result of the general elections held in 1937. Three years of Congress rule had shown that Muslims were not satisfied with it and signs were already discernible that the Muslim intelligentsia

fired with the spirit of Muslim Nationalism were thinking of having a separate organisation of their own to ventilate their grievances against the Congress Raj as well as the British Imperialism. A shrewd and seasoned politician that he was Mohammed Ali Jinnah had given expression to this inner urge of Muslim intellectuals by repeatedly challenging the claim of the Congress leaders to represent the whole of India. In reply to the slogan of the Congress leaders that there were only two parties in the country-Congress and the British-Jinnah had raised the protest that there was a third party as well-the Muslims. By 1939 the separatist movement of Jinnah had caught the imagination of the educated Muslims of India. It was growing day by day and percolating into the Muslim masses. Kashmir being an integral part of the subcontinent the changes outside the State in British India were deeply affecting the political conditions and the mentality of the people inside the State.

In these circumstances, what was the National Conference to do ? Would it form alliance with the Congress or with the Muslim League, or would it remain neutral and independent, away from the sphere of influence of both ? And lastly even if it would like to do so, could it remain neutral and independent ? These were the ticklish questions that faced the leaders of the Conference almost immediately after the birth of the nationalist organisation and it was on their solution that the future of the country solely depended. It is a pity that the questions were never squarely faced and answered. Finding them too intricate and perplexing the leaders left the problems to solve themselves.

The special session of the Muslim Conference which changed the name and the constitution of the organisation, authorised the Working Committee to co-opt a few prominent non-Muslim workers in all elected bodies after they had been duly enrolled as primary members of the Conference, to give the organization the appearance of a nationalist body. Accordingly some Hindu and Sikh public workers were taken in the Working Committee as well as in the General Council. Nearly

all new entrants had worked for years in different communalist Hindu and Sikh organisations and had risen to eminence by espousing the cause of obscurantism, reaction and repression. By merely joining the National Conference it was difficult for them to totally eschew their old mentality and the political doctrines in support of which they had fought for many years. At best from being Hindu Communalists they could take a big jump and become Hindu Nationalists. Above that they could not rise. Though all of them paid extravagant tributes to secularism in season and out of season, that noble creed still existed only in name.

From the outset the non-Muslim members of the National Conference set their heart on bringing the Party, the spear head of the Freedom Movement, under the increasing influence of the Indian National Congress. They wanted to see this desire fulfilled within months and not years. No step was allowed by non-Muslim members to be taken and no decision adopted by the Conference unless and until it was strictly in consonance with the Congress philosophy and practice. Be it the matter of the party constitution, the flag, the national language, slogans and in fact any resolution on any imaginable subject, these members raised hue and cry if the Conference did not follow in the footsteps of the Congress. This attitude of their new colleagues made the Muslim leaders uneasy but helpless. Having become nationalist and non-communal at any rate in name, the Conference could not be expected to ally itself with the Muslim League. And only deep insight into the rapid changes then taking place in British Indian politics and their repercussions inside the State, could keep the National Conference away from the Congress. Seemingly its becoming friendly towards the Congress was unexceptionable.

In trying to bring the National Conference under the hegemony of the Congress leaders, the Hindu and the Sikh members were not prompted by any burning desire for freedom or even by the wish to secularise State politics. They only felt happy that by doing so they were helping the cause of Indian Nationalism

which, despite the statements of the Congress leaders to the contrary, was becoming another name for Hindu Nationalism. Clearly it was the prompting of the communal mentality of the Hindus which was cleverly presented in a nationalist secular garb.

The Muslim leaders did not remain unconcerned while their non-Muslim colleagues made these crafty moves. Like the latter they had been accustomed to think, talk and act as unrepentant communalists for eight years. They had triumphantly utilised the services of the slogan "Islam in Danger" against the Hindu Dogra rule. If they had become liberal under force of arguments or by bitter experience and had by their own sweet will opened the doors of the Conference for non-Muslims to enter, they could not allow that generosity to be abused or misused. They would rather re-convert the National Conference into the Muslim Conference than passively witness the Hindu members contriving to make the organisation a branch of the Indian National Congress. Indeed it was revealed only a few months after the formation of the National Conference that Maulvi Mohammed Sayid, General Secretary of the Conference, had actively encouraged behind the scenes a few impulsive Muslim young men to start a Muslim Conference and promised them not only his own help but that of some other Muslim leaders of the National Conference as well but that when the proposal matured he turned a *volte face* owing to the fear of being exposed.

Thus the perspective was quite dreary. The high command of the National Conference was a house divided against itself. While the Hindu members were actively pulling in one direction, the Muslim members were vigorously pulling in theother. At every step strife ensued. It was feared that the National Conference might prove still-born.

To end this tussle within the Conference ranks, a leader gifted with power of imagination and far-sight whose own philosophy of life would be grounded on the firm foundation of rationalism, was needed to guide the errant members of the Working Committee. Abdullah had shown marvellous courage

and consistancy in getting the Muslim Conference changed into the National Conference. His popularity, reputation and prestige were unique and unprecedented at the moment. He could work wonders provided he could maintain the clarity of thought, the magnanimity of heart and the boldness in action that he had been exhibiting for a considerable period. But unhappily he became confused. To his intellectual and progressive colleagues that did not entirely come as a surprise. Abdullah is a hater of books and no admirer of intellectual debates and discourses. He shuns the company of the learned and rarely tolerates a man with independent opinions about him. Being utterly ignorant of Kashmir history and the developments in contemporary world of thought and politics, he could not comprehend the forces that had begun to play within the ranks of the National Conference or in broader sphere among different classes and communities living in the State. He therefore adopted an amateurish and dangerous policy of appeasing by turns the Hindus and the Muslims. To him the pith of secularism lies in it and there is nothing beyond. Ever since this policy has remained an inalienable part of Abdullah's politics though implementation of his desires had to be restricted according to the exigencies of the times.

Many educated Muslims heartily disliked the new orientation that the leaders had given to the politics of the State. From June 1938, when the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference had adopted the resolution recommending change in the name and constitution of the Conference, they had looked with grave suspicions and doubts at the activities of the leaders. The educated unemployed Muslim young men who had utilised the Muslim Conference as an instrument to secure government jobs for themselves, also entertained unfounded fears that their hopes were fading out. But since all the prominent Muslim leaders of all shades of opinion including Abdullah, Abbas, Sagar, Bakshi, Beg, Sadiq and Sayid had joined the National Conference it was futile to raise a discordant note. Things appeared on the surface to be moving satisfactorily well and the top-ranking leaders were extremely complacent.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE LED ASTRAY

It was the biggest grievance of the State Hindus, both progressives and reactionaries, that the Freedom Movement of the country was conducted by the popular Muslim leaders in the name of religion and on the basis of communalism. This, they averred, made the minorities apprehensive and also made it very difficult for non-Muslims to take due share in the freedom struggle. This was doubtless an irrefutable charge which the Muslim leaders met with an equally serious challenge by changing the name of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference and by throwing its doors open for non-Muslim patriots to come in. It was therefore expected that Hindu publicists and politicians would enthusiastically hail the change and soon after the successful termination of the Special Session, Hindus in large numbers would enrol themselves as primary members of the National Conference. This did not happen. As subsequent events showed, before taking any steps in this direction, the astute upper class Hindus wanted to be sure about the new ideology of the Muslim leaders and the future programme and policy of the National Conference. If, they thought, the new organisation continued to fight for the freedom of the Kashmir people which in other words meant the emancipation of the Muslim masses and the annihilation of the vested interests (including the Dogra Rule) which were mostly held by Hindus, then the change in the name would be immaterial and even dangerous for the Hindus. But if the National Conference furnished proofs of becoming harmless towards exploiters and peaceful in its ways the Hindus would certainly sympathetically consider to swell the ranks of the Conference by joining it as its members. Many of the few Hindu and Sikh leaders who had joined it already conveyed hopeful assurances to their co-religionists outside that the painstaking work they were doing inside the organisation was bound to bear fruit. Not by any design but perhaps unconsciously, some Hindu members of the National Conference were playing the role of fifth columnists by shattering the revolutionary basis of the organisation.

Feeling that his Muslim opponents had been rendered impotent by circumstances, Abdullah started coaxing the

Hindus. Some sort of inferiority complex made him believe that until an appreciable number of non-Muslims came into the Conference, secularism would remain lame. It appeared beyond his imagination to think that an organisation composed entirely of Muslims could also own the principle of secularism and strictly implement it in practice. He thought that after bringing a few Hindus within his fold, all that he did would be considered non-communal. He was not to blame; for, that was and to a large extent is the interpretation of secularism in vogue in India. But it proved to be the main cause of the failure of the National Conference. Secularism does not consist in the composition of the membership of a party; it consists in the mental outlook and the attitude and approach of the members of the party to all the problems with which the country is faced and to life in general.

A grand session of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference was held at Anantnag on 30th and 31st September and 1st October, 1939. The session ratified the document known as the National Demand which had been issued by twelve leaders of the State under their own signatures on the 29th of August, 1938. One of the clauses of the demand ran as follows:

> "The election of the Legislature shall be made on the basis of joint electorates; seats should be reserved for the minorities and all safeguards and weightages should be guaranteed to them in the Constitution for the protection of their linguistic, religious, cultural, political and economic rights according to the principles enunciated, accepted or acted upon by the Indian National Congress from time to time. In addition to the above the religious rights and sentiments of all the communities should be respected and not interfered with."

The Second World War had started a few weeks before the session opened at Anantnag. A resolution was passed in which the Conference "appreciated the intention underlying the statement issued by the Working Committee of the National Congress about the War and the policy of the British Government towards the political aspirations of the Indian Nation". It will be observed that both these resolutions drove the Conference closer to the Indian National Congress. It is interesting to record that Chaudhris Abbas and Hamid Ullah and many

other Muslim leaders from Jammu participated in the deliberations of the session but none raised any protest against this clear trend in the policy of the Conference.

Naturally the non-Muslim members of the Conference felt jubilant at their first victory which the Anantnag session proved for them on the whole. They were not far from truth when they claimed that something more substantial and deeper than the mere name of the organisation had been changed. These statements were confirmed by Abdullah when at the close of the Anantnag session he delivered a series of speeches eulogizing the Congress on the one hand and condemning the League ideology on the other. This, however, produced a disastrous effect on the Muslim public opinion.

A meeting of the Working Committee was held at Mirpur on 28th of December, 1939, when a resolution was adopted in which the Committee "strongly resented exclusion of the recognised court language of the State viz Hindustani from the list of both compulsory and optional subjects prescribed for the Kashmir Civil Service examinations" and "strongly urged its inclusion as one of the compulsory subjects, *facility to be given to the candidates to use either Persian or Devanagri script as they like*". On the face of it the resolution was in conformity with the principles of composite nationalism and unexceptionable. But it was a departure from the existing position of the official language in the State, which has been Urdu in Persian script for more than seventy years. By demanding introduction of Hindustani in both Persian and Devanagri scripts as a subject for the Kashmir Civil Service Gazetted examinations, the Working Committee was paving the way for replacement of Urdu in Persian script by Hindustani in both Devanagri and Persian scripts. This move created a hostile reaction in the Muslim public opinion not only within the State but also all over the subcontinent. Prem Nath Bazaz in a private talk beckoned Abdullah of the possible consequences and advised him not to hurry up with the resolution as there was no immediate need of its being adopted. But in pursuance of their aims to bring the National Conference closer to the Congress, the Hindu

members of the Committee were insistent that the resolution be adopted in the meeting. Abdullah yielded and the Committee agreed. Neither Abbas nor Allah Rakha Sagar, members of the Working Committee, were present in the meeting.

Communal-minded and educated Muslims were waiting for this day. They had been demoralised by the overwhelming popularity of the Nationalist forces in the Valley and were discreet to lie low. But when Abdullah's speeches irritated the Muslim mind they saw their chance. All sorts of stories, false and true, were sedulously spread among the Muslims about the intentions and the programme of the National Conference. Unfortunately enough the entire Muslim Press became hostile to the nationalist movement and made the situation worse.

At this stage Ghulam Abbas reminded Abdullah of his assurance on the eve of the Special Session that the National Conference would remain aloof from outside politics and the influence of the Congress and the League ideologies but getting no satisfactory reply he resigned from the Conference. With him left most of the Jammu Muslim leaders.

Abdullah realized now that he was losing ground among the Muslims without making a headway among the non-Muslims. Something must be done to retrieve the loss. He hit on an idea. Under the auspices of a Muslim Trust known as Auqaf Committee which the Nationalist Muslim leaders had formed to manage the important religious shrines and their property, he arranged the celebrations of *Id-i-Milad* on the 24th April, 1940. In order to do some propaganda before hand for the success of the celebrations, meetings were held throughout the city on different days for about two weeks. The speeches delivered in these congregations were hardly creditable to Abdullah, the sponsor of Nationalism. In his characteristically demogogic manner he attacked Hindu politics, derided Hindu society and contemptuously referred to Hindu religion. In one of these public utterances he made an unwise remark that Islam was the sun and other religions were stars, implying thereby that when the sun appeared stars could not be seen. This displeased and embarrassed his Hindu colleagues. Subse-

quently on 28th April, Abdullah was questioned by these members in the meeting of the Working Committee. Exception was taken to his remarks about the comparative greatness of Islam. In an angry reply Abdullah remarked that what he had said was correct and he would repeat it because he was "Muslim first and Muslim last" in every thing he did. Hot words were uttered on both sides which ended the meeting in bitterness. Next day passions ran high again in another meeting over a misunderstanding. This unhappy episode ended in the resignation of Jia Lal Kilam and Kashyap Bandhu, two leading Kashmiri Pandit members of the party.

It was not surprising that Abdullah felt extremely disheartened at these developments. But he did not allow the dismay to overwhelm him and he did not take the defeat lying down. However instead of critically analysing the basic causes of his misfortune he again resorted to his novel method. He invited Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru to be a guest of the National Conference while he was contemplating to visit the Valley in May that year. Abdullah did this in anticipation of the consent of his colleagues. Nehru's tour of the State was a tremendous demonstration of public enthusiasm particularly among the Hindus in which the adverse effects of the resignations of the two Kashmiri Pandit members were drowned. It also rehabilitated the lost position and prestige of the National Conference among the Hindus to a considerable extent.

Pandit Jawahar Lal's visit proved a turning point in the political career of Abdullah as well as in the history of Freedom Movement. A reception committee had been formed of which Prem Nath Bazaz and Ghulam Mohammed Sadiq were the Secretaries, but all the work in connection with the Congress leader's visit was solely conducted by either Abdullah or Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed. The grand reception contemplated needed funds but not a farthing was contributed by the Muslims. The Hindus particularly the prosperous Punjabi traders supplied funds generously, even lavishly. Within a few days no less than twenty-five thousand rupees came in, a sum never collec-

ted so speedily from the people at a time in the one decade-old history of the Kashmir Movement.

Pandit Nehru toured the different parts of the Valley for ten days. His speeches, his interviews and his activities in general received the widest publicity in the Press outside the State. Leading Congress journals had sent special representatives to cover the tour. For the first time in his life Abdullah and the National Conference came into limelight and got publicity not only all over the subcontinent of India but even beyond its shores.

These two events opened the eyes of Abdullah as to what Congressmen could do for him if he could in any way enlist their sympathies for his cause. For nearly ten years he had been ceaselessly toiling for the liberation of the State Muslims. He had been the beloved hero of the community. But he had neither secured funds so readily or so liberally nor did he get such wide publicity in the outside Press as he did by associating with Nehru. Sheikh Abdullah's dormant ambitions for fame and power were aroused. He decided to go the whole hog with the Congress.

Thus came the golden opportunity for Hindus to exploit. But the State minorities were divided among themselves. Despite the best efforts of some well-meaning public workers unlike Muslims, the State minorities comprising Dogras, Kashmiri Pandits, Sikhs, Buddhists and Harijans have never united to formulate common demands. They did never have a towering personality to bring them all under one banner. The Dogras and the Pandits have for good reasons particularly been suspicious of each other. The Dogras were the favourite children of the Maharaja, his own kith and kin. But valley Hindus were treated differently. "Kashmiri Pandits who are a highly educated community and represent the intellectual class are, in a sense, depressed because they get no opportunity of rising in government service or in any other field of useful activity such as industry or commerce, with the result that they are also discontented and present a problem which requires to be seriously tackled", said Sir Albion Banerjee in his famous interview in March 1929, earlier referred to. For these reasons

the Dogras and the Pandits have never formed an alliance in State politics. Probably the leaders of both the communities might have, under the influence of their anti-Muslim prejudices, foolishly spoiled the opportunity and lost the splendid chance of capturing the soul of the National Conference, the only weapon in the hands of the revolutionary masses in the State in 1940. But happily for the State Hindus but unhappily for the immediate future of Kashmir, an intelligent and an experienced fellow was present in the State who most adroitly manipulated the affair in the best interests of the Hindu vested interests and indeed for the welfare of Hindu India according to the orthodox communalist's view-point.

In 1936 the Maharaja had appointed a crafty Brahmin Dewan Bahadur (afterwards Sir) N. Gopalaswami Ayyengar, an old, efficient and capable civil servant of Madras as his Prime Minister. Like all clever Hindus Ayyengar was a communalist and a nationalist at the same time. He was a sundried bureaucrat and a perfect disciplinarian who believed in strong government in Kashmir. Before he had administered the State for many months Ayyengar became thoroughly popular with the upper class Hindus. In equal measure, if not more, he earned the hatred of the Muslims and the progressives in the country. He was determined to eradicate the Freedom Movement before he left the country and for the achievement of this objective he had been applying all the energies of his active mind and soul.

Ayyengar was a Gandhist at heart and reposed complete confidence in the ideals of the Congress. He closely watched the events and developments which took place in Kashmir politics during the days of Nehru's tour. He could rightly guess the spiritual and moral crisis through which Abdullah was passing. In a flash of genius he thought of playing the role that ordinarily should have been played by the State Hindu leaders. He became sympathetic towards the top-most man of the National Conference and encouraged him to plunge headlong into the Congress ideology. As we shall presently see, the lead given by Ayyengar was speedily followed by the conservative and re-

actionary Hindus of the State who began to join the ranks of the National Conference in increasing numbers.

This episode of Nehru's visit to the Valley killed Abdullah, the revolutionary, the fighter for freedom. We shall no more hear of him in that capacity. Of course Abdullah continued to cry and harangue in the name of the Holy Cause but in reality all that he did after this was actuated and prompted by his lust for power and fame. No doubt he has been all along rationalising his anti-democratic and anti national activities by adducing as many plausible and clever arguments as his advisers could think of, but as we shall see in the course of this survey, gradually but surely he has been led astray and has gone away from the goal of the Freedom Movement in the opposite direction. Ultimately he became a tool to crush the people of Kashmir in the hands of those very exploiting forces whom he had originally planned to exterminate.

Kashmir Muslims made a grievance out of Nehru's visit by saying that the National Conference had entirely identified itself with the "Hindu Body", the Congress. This complaint became so widespread within a few months of the departure of Nehru that when the second session of the National Conference met at Baramulla on 28th September, 1940, all the delegates were nominated as only a small number of primary members had been enrolled during the course of the year. No Muslim delegates attended from the Jammu province except the Mirpur district. It was significant that a large contingent of Hindu and Sikh delegates had come from all over the State and even from Jammu.

The total indifference of the Muslims towards the National Conference disheartened many Muslim nationalist leaders, notably Afzal Beg and Maulvi Sayid the two communally inclined members of the high command, if not Abdullah and Bakshi as well. But what was the remedy ? By now all the leaders had come round to the view that the alliance with the Congress was essential to secure funds and publicity for the National Conference. Nevertheless it was equally necessary that the State Muslims should be brought back into the Conference fold.

For that some device was to be thought over and acted upon. An opportunity came handy.

A few days after the Baramulla Session, the Government issued their orders on the recommendations of the official committee which they had set up two years earlier for the reorganisation of the educational system then prevalent in the State. While dealing with the medium of instruction in the State schools the government ordered :

> "The language should be a common one, viz., simple Urdu. But for reading and writing, both the Devanagri script and the Persian script should have equal recognition. The text books to be used in imparting instructions in the various subjects should be same but printed in both scripts."
>
> "Pupils attending a school should be at liberty to choose to use either of the two scripts for reading and writing.
>
> "Teachers employed in schools which have or are likely to have a fixed minimum strength of children to learn each of the two recognised scripts should know both scripts. This minimum strength is fixed at 15 per cent of the total average strength on the rolls of the schools.
>
> "Teachers who are already employed in schools which require both scripts but who are not acquainted with one of them should learn it to the satisfaction of a prescribed authority within a period of one year. No person will be appointed to the post of a teacher in any such school in the future unless he knows to read and write both scripts or if he does not know both scripts he shall not be confirmed in his post unless, within a period of one year of his appointment, he learns to read and write satisfactorily the script with which he is not already familiar."

These orders were quite reasonable. They had a value from nationalist point of view because of the principle of self-determination which they allowed in the matter of choice of the script to all sections of the people living in the State. And what was more they were quite in accordance with the demand of the National Conference as contained in the resolution of the Working Committee adopted at Mirpur mentioned earlier in this chapter.

The Government orders were not liked by the disgruntled communal Muslims. They thought it to be an opportune moment to make an assault on the Nationalists and finish them. The provisions of the Government orders were misreported. Irresponsible and inflammatory speeches were made in certain

quarters to excite the Muslims. An attempt was made by a number of Muslim workers to revive the Muslim Conference and a manifesto was issued on 1st October, 1940, for the purpose.

Nationalist Muslims now became desperate and Abdullah made a somersault. Before the members of the Working Committee had an opportunity to discuss the problem among themselves he and his two Muslim colleagues, Afzal Beg and Mohammed Sayid, issued statements, delivered speeches and persuaded Muslim gatherings to adopt resolutions vigorously condemning the Government orders. It is not surprising that remarks casting aspersions on Hindus were also made in these exclusive Muslim gatherings which were mostly held in the premises of the mosques.

Inside the Legislature too the Nationalist Group composed of eight Muslim members, under direction of Abdullah, followed a similar course. One of its members, Maulvi Ghulam Mustafa, made very wild and reckless charges against the Pandit community as a whole in the course of his speech supporting a cut motion to "discuss the preponderance of Kashmiri Pandits in State Service".

It was clear beyond doubt that the Conference had ceased to be a revolutionary nationalist body which had come into existence to express the inner urge of the suppressed and tyrannised masses and to fight for the freedom of the country. It appeared certain that with the lead Abdullah was giving Kashmir would land into great difficulties. No more could those people support him whose only aim in life was the emancipation of their motherland from alien dominance and freedom of Kashmiris from political, social, economic and spiritual thraldom. Therefore with a heavy heart Prem Nath Bazaz resigned from the membership of the Working Committee on the 28th November, 1940. When the matters went on deteriorating still further he left the Conference for good a few months later. Bazaz was followed by many others who on similar grounds despaired of the future of the National Conference and dissociated from the organization.

CHAPTER TEN

AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE

THIS new turn in the National Conference politics dismayed the Hindus but not the cunning Ayyengar. He did not lose his patience. He was of the opinion that if by temporarily and superficially becoming anti-Hindu and pro-communalist Abdullah and his colleagues can rehabilitate their prestige and popularity among the Muslim masses, the State Hindus should not be scared by it. They should welcome it as a policy designed in the best interests of the State minorities. Only in one thing, Ayyengar thought, the Hindus need remain cautious; in basic matters of all India importance Abdullah and his National Conference should continue to remain on the side of the Congress. If that was assured other problems of lesser consequence would take care of themselves and should not cause great worry to the Hindus. Ayyengar's diagnosis from the reactionary Hindu viewpoint was eminently judicious and right. Not only did he himself adjust the policy of his government to it so long as he remained the Prime Minister of Kashmir State; subsequently the Congress leaders and the Congress Government of India have also tenaciously stuck to it.

Muslim communalists have frequently levelled the charge against Ayyengar that it was through his machinations and manoeuvrings that the Muslim Conference was converted into National Conference. There is not a shred of truth in this accusation (or is it an undeserved compliment?). It is a slur on the intelligence, patriotism, honesty and sincerity of all Muslim leaders including Abbas and Sagar who deliberately and voluntarily agreed to secularise State politics in June 1939. In 1938-39 the Conference was pulsating with revolutionary fervour. For once in the history of the struggle all prominent, popular and renowned leaders had joined hands to liberate Kashmir. This prospect was not welcomed by Ayyengar and indeed it had

shaken him in his shoes. He was not sure that he would be able to face the rising tide of nationalism in the State. He therefore tried to crush the movement by imprisoning hundreds of people including the signatories to the National Demand in August-September, 1939. This is a clear proof that Ayyengar was afraid of the Freedom Movement becoming broad-based, divorced from religion and free from ideological confusion. He fully understood that a mass movement in Kashmir would be a Muslim movement in essence which would overthrow the Hindu Dogra Rule and immensely strengthen the forces of Muslim Nationalism in North India. What perplexed him most was that many Hindus had begun to give open support to the Muslim movement. These fears were not illusory. Had Abdullah not lost his balance and had he not been tormented by insatiable hunger for power and publicity, Kashmir would have marched on the path of freedom from victory to victory under the banner of the National Conference and would not have been bleeding and lying prostrate under the iron heels of the foreign armies as it is today. But let us not anticipate.

The campaign of Abdullah against the Government orders regarding the medium of instruction in the schools did not gather any strength. For obvious reasons Hindus were opposed to it and Muslims did not actively support it because they felt aggrieved owing to the pro-Congress policy of the National Conference. Ayyengar's government simply ignored the agitation and let Abdullah and his colleagues spit fire for a few weeks and cool down in the end.

In British India political conditions were changing with astounding speed. Jinnah had started a war of nerves through his flood of statements and was inflicting defeat after defeat on Congress leaders. He had created a psychological atmosphere in the subcontinent in which Muslims began to look upon the Congress as the enemy of the Faith. When the Muslim League adopted the epoch-making resolution in 1940 at its Lahore Session demanding the partition of India on religious basis, though conceited Congressmen derided the move as impracticable and absurd, thoughtful Hindus were deeply per-

turbed. The cool-headed and crafty Brahmin Prime Minister of Kashmir had the sagacity to foresee that this Hindu State with overwhelming Muslim population was in the "danger zone" and unless something was done in advance to strengthen the foundations of the Dogra Raj by allying an influential section of the Kashmir Muslims with it, it was foredoomed to be included in Pakistan. So when Abdullah voluntarily led the National Conference direct into the Congress parlour, Ayyengar heartily welcomed it and tried to encourage the move in every way. He was however astute enough not to expose his earnestness nor his patronage of Abdullah lest such indiscreet actions might mar the bright chances of success for the scheme that he had put into operation.

Having failed to produce any impression upon the mind of the Government by his campaign of speeches and demonstrations against the policy about the medium of instruction in schools, Abdullah prevailed on his Working Committee to instruct the Conference party in the Legislature to resign *en bloc* as a protest. But the withdrawal of the eight members, all of whom were Muslims, from the Legislative Assembly did not improve the matters in any way because the Government, conscious of the anti-Nationalist stand of the National Conference in the controversy, felt sure that the agitation was bound to end in dismal failure. And so it did. The National Conference leaders had wrongly thought that the Government would hold bye-elections to the Assembly for the seats that had been vacated by the resignation of the members of the Nationalist party. They wanted to take part in the contest and by making the Hindi-Urdu issue as the main plank of the campaign, expected to rouse the communal passions of the Muslims. By this method the Nationalists hoped to kill two birds with one stone; first to regain the lost prestige among the Kashmir Muslims and second to win the bye-elections and thereby force the government to amend their orders regarding the double script. But Ayyengar was more than a match for the rabble-rousers. To their chagrin he decided not to have any bye-elections and left the eight seats vacant in the Legislature. It was said that the legal

advisers to the Kashmir Government were of the opinion that it would involve no infringement of the Constitution if the Assembly carried on its functions without the presence of the eight of its members who resigned voluntarily. The Nationalists were crest-fallen but could not even effectively protest as they had by their actions forfeited the goodwill of the people in the State.

Although N. Gopalaswami Ayyengar ardently desired that the National Conference should remain on the side of the Congress in the, then, impending clash in British Indian politics and should also co-operate with the Government with the purpose of strengthening the Dogra Raj, he was cautious enough to see that no substantial power was transferred into the hands of the Nationalists. Ayyengar was a die-hard administrator and a conservative statesman. He planned to satisfy the Nationalists with trifles and petty concessions. In one thing, however, he was abnormally generous towards Abdullah and his colleagues: he overlooked all the law-breaking and peace-disturbing activities of the Nationalists when they were directed against their political opponents which unhappily was not infrequently the case.

For, after facing some initial difficulties Ghulam Abbas was ultimately successful with the help of his Jammu colleagues in reviving the Muslim Conference in 1941. He had also been able to enlist the sympathies of a small section of Muslims and the active support of Mir Waiz Usuf Shah and his followers in the Valley. Intolerant of any point of view in politics other than their own, the Nationalists had been kicking up row in every ward and *mohalla* of the city with the followers of the Muslim Conference. Almost every week cases were reported of black eyes and bruised heads in the scuffles between the two factions of the Muslims, the victims mostly being the Muslim Conferencites.

It is useless to go into the details of this disgraceful chapter in the political history of the Valley. But it was significant that N.G. Ayyengar, the high-priest of strong government as he considered himself to be, did not take any action to bring the cul-

prits, the violaters of law and order to book. Indeed he deliberately connived at the atrocities of the Nationalists. The factious fight between the two sections culminated in a formidable clash on the *Id* day when Sheikh Abdullah accompanied by a few followers went about from street to street in the Amira Kadal area, a hocky stick in his hand, with which he beat many a Muslim passerby who were suspected of having sympathies with the cause of the Muslim Conference. When this objectionable behaviour was adversely commented upon in the Press, Abdullah made the infamous remarks that "if to silence my opponents I have to take up a sword I will not hesitate to do so." Subsequent history of Kashmir has shown how truthful he has been in issuing this warning nearly twelve years ago.

The *Id-ul-Zuha* of 1942 is painfully remembered by the Kashmir Muslims to this day. Instead of being an occasion for rejoicings it turned to be a day of woes and tears. Innocent people were humiliated on the public streets, deprived of their belongings and made to utter slogans disliked by them. For fear of being looted many Muslims closed their shops. Gangs of Nationalists wandered through those parts of the city where they felt to be strong and collected tolls from shopkeepers belonging to the opposite camp.

In October 1941, Maharaja Hari Singh went abroad for a tour of the Middle East to meet the State troops which were fighting there in the Second World War on the side of the Allies. Immediately after his return the Maharaja issued an order on the advice of his Government headed by Ayyengar to impose a ban on the circulation of the book *Inside Kashmir* written by Prem Nath Bazaz which had been published a few days earlier. The Police searched the premises of "Hamdard" office and shops of booksellers in the city, took possession of as many copies of the book as they could lay their hands upon and subsequently destroyed them. The contents of the book had annoyed the Nationalists. They were happy that its circulation was stopped.

By now the policy of Ayyengar had begun to bear fruit.

The Nationalists had forgotten all about the revolution. They were more busy and interested in vanquishing the Muslim communalists than in the freedom of Kashmir. The Brahmin Prime Minister had earned the gratitude of the Nationalists not by giving them any share, however tiny, in the Constitutional Government or the administration of the State but by allowing them perfect immunity from the long hand of law when they victimised and terrorised their opponents by *lathis*, stones and other weapons.

Friendly relations having been established with the Ayyengar Government, the Nationalists thought of undoing the wrong they had done to themselves by instructing their party members to resign from the Legislature. They had seen to their dismay that session after session of the Assembly had merrily passed by, the eight seats lying empty. If anybody had suffered more from it, it was the National Conference which was deprived of the advantages of propaganda that this forum offered. But how could the resigned members get back into their seats. The ever-obliging Prime Minister readily came forth with an attractive though anti-democratic suggestion. Since the National Conference was the "acknowledged popular" party, at any rate acknowledged by the Maharaja's Government and the leaders of the Conference themselves, there was no harm if the candidates proposed by the Conference were nominated by the special orders of the Maharaja to fill the eight vacant elected seats in the Assembly. Why should there be any election at all, opined the Prime Minister. The Working Committee was only too glad to accept the mischievous proposal. The names of the candidates were presented in summer 1942 to the Prime Minister; the Maharaja's commands were issued without any delay and the elected seats were filled up with nominated candidates. The people residing in the eight constituencies entitled to vote under the provisions of the Constitution were deprived of the right which they had earned after a hard struggle and by rendering great sacrifices. This was the first serious blow that the Nationalists dealt at the Constitutional Government in Kashmir. With it started the process of slow assassination of Demo-

cracy in the State. It was yet another victory of Ayyengar to strengthen the despotic Dogra Raj and to weaken the Freedom Movement.

At the advent of winter 1942-43, an acute scarcity of fuel was felt in the Valley particularly in Srinagar. The Government made some arrangements to supply fuel to the people at depots opened in different parts of the city under the supervision of the Forest Department. There was a demand that non-officials should also be associated with the work in order that the distribution of this necessity of life was equitable and all people, high and low, got their due share. A fuel committee composed of two non-officials, one Hindu and one Muslim, was established to advise the officer-in-charge of the Fuel Supply Department. Adhering strictly to his, by then well known, policy of partiality towards the Nationalists, Ayyengar appointed a leader of the National Conference, Ghulam Mohammed Bakhshi, to represent the Muslims. Within a few days of the functioning of the Fuel Committee there was hue and cry from large numbers of people who had been plainly told that they could get no fuel because they were supporters of the Muslim Conference or followers of Mir Waiz Usuf Shah. Cries were raised on all sides and innumerable complaints were addressed to the Government but to no purpose. When people strongly protested against the partisan attitude of the National Conference representative, they were insulted, abused and beaten. Corruption was rampant at the depots and a big portion of the fuel went into black market the proceeds of which, as reported in the Press, were shared by the officials and non-officials alike. At the same time Ayyengar Government appointed another committee composed of officials and non-officials to revise the *shali* ration cards and again a Nationalist was taken as one of the members. This Committee created havoc by either cancelling the cards of those who were opposed to the Nationalist politics or by reducing the number of their family members shown in the cards without any reason. This gave a foretaste of the despotic, tyrannical, barbarous and corrupt regime that the Kashmir people were to

witness under the Nationalist Government in years to come and from which the unfortunate Valley finds no way of liberation till the present day.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

JINNAH OUTWITS NATIONALISTS

IN 1942 *goondaism* and hooliganism were spreading to all parts of the Valley and it was becoming clearer day after day that the Muslim Conference was totally incapable to protect the people or even its own adherents against the criminal onslaughts of the Nationalists. If the new philosophy of terrorism practised by the Nationalists was allowed to take roots in the soil it would not only wipe out the Kashmir culture nourished through ages ; it would prove a formidable menace for the Freedom Movement. All patriots to whatever ideology or community they belonged were thoroughly shaken by the perspective ; some of them were stirred into action.

A few educated people mostly Kashmir Pandits had been regularly discussing problems facing the country and the ways and means by which the Freedom Movement could be resurrected from the ruin under which it had lain after the fall of the National Conference from its high principles. Witnessing the heart-rending events of the *Id* day and realising the inadequacy of the Muslim Conference ideology to lead the freedom fight, they decided to form a new revolutionary body in the State. It was called the Kashmir Socialist Party and came into being in March, 1942. Prominent among those who founded the Party were Prem Nath Bazaz and Kanhya Lal Kaul. The Socialists immediately applied themselves to the task of educating the people about the fundamental problems of economics and politics in order to make them politically conscious. A large number of young men and college students came under the influence of the Socialists. By the middle of 1942 another progressive organisation "Young Socialist League" came into existence to disseminate knowledge on the subjects of Philosophy, History, Independence, Democracy and Socialism. Sham Lal Yechha, Sana Ullah Shamim, Arjan Nath Chakku, Prithvi Nath Kaul, Ghulam

Mohammed Kashkari, Lok Nath Kissoo, Dwarika Nath Bhan, Nand Lal Wattal Brij Nath Safaya, G. Rasul Mir and Kashi Nath Aima were some of the enthusiastic workers of the League. Classes were held under the auspices of the League where scientific education on politics was imparted to scores of young men. With the establishment of these two organisations the seeds of a progressive movement free from the taints of communalism and nationalism were laid in the Valley eleven years ago. To be sure the Socialists had a limited following in the Valley which was confined to the intellectual classes and the student community. But since the party had owned the positive outcome of the Kashmir Freedom Movement through the ages and adopted it to scientific modernism, it was bound to bring the revolutionary masses under its banner. That part of the story we shall tell at its proper place.

Early in 1942 the British Government deputed Sir Stafford Cripps with certain proposals for grant of independence to India. Till the time of the despatch of this Mission the British Government had been insisting on the unity of the subcontinent though at the same time it was made explicit in all official declarations that the Imperial Government could not hand over power to the Indians unless and until the real representatives of all the classes and communities were agreed on the future form of government and its composition. For the first time the National Government of Britain envisaged the partition of India in the Cripps Plan by proposing that if the provinces with Muslim majorities so desired they could federate by themselves and secede from the residue of the subcontinent.

It was an important condition for the implementation of the Plan that it should be acceptable to all the main political parties in India including the Congress and the League. This condition was not fulfilled and Cripps returned unsuccessful. But the publication of the Plan strengthened the position of the Muslim League and its leader Jinnah among the Muslims. Pakistan no more remained a visionary's fantastic dream and a political absurdity. Sensible people felt that sooner or later it was bound to come into existence. If that was so the place

of Kashmir which is overwhelmingly Muslim in its population could be nowhere else except in the Islamic State of Pakistan. That thought became galling to the Nationalists. They had already lost considerable ground in the political field because of their misdeeds. The new development in the British Indian politics dealt a fresh blow at their prestige. However the failure of the Cripps Mission provided an opportunity to heave a sigh of relief. It was soon after this new crisis in their politics that the Nationalists developed a novel policy of espousing League ideology inside the State and advocating the Congress secularism outside it. The common accusation against the Nationalists that they are nationalists in India and communalists at home is not entirely unfounded.

The Quit India Movement demanding the total withdrawal of the British from the subcontinent was started by the Congress in August 1942. Jinnah called it a dagger that the Congress had placed at the breast of the Muslims so that they may be cowed down and then discontinue to demand their right of self-determination. But Jinnah was not the man to be so easily terrorised. He did not allow the Muslim point of view to be drowned in the din and bustle that the Quit India agitation roused in the Hindu Provinces.

In Kashmir the Nationalists did their best to kick up a row in support of the Congress. But they failed because the Muslims refused to be a party to it. Not only did the supporters of the Muslim Conference oppose the Nationalists because Jinnah had publicly warned the Muslims to keep aloof from falling into the Congress trap ; but Kashmir Socialist Party also issued a closely reasoned Manifesto stressing that the sabotage movement of the Congress was bound to impair the war efforts of the Allies and that it could be dangerous for World Democracy of which Indian Democracy was an integral part. "It is foolish to believe that democracy in India can come into its own afte the triumph of Fascism on the international front," declared the Kashmir Socialists. "Our hope lies in the success of World Democracy and we refuse to be duped by reactionary Indian Nationalism as represented by the Congress". Many thousand

copies of the Manifesto in English and Urdu languages were distributed by the members of the Young Socialist League in colleges, schools, offices, hotels and the general public in Srinagar and other big towns of the Valley. This vehement opposition to the Nationalists' move threw cold water over all their activities. But they were not disheartened as Premier Ayyengar was encouraging them to carry on as best they could. Day in and day out the Nationalist leaders held public meetings where most vituperative and filthy language was used to present the Allies particularly the British in darkest colours. But no passions could be roused in the Valley and the game had to be abandoned.

The hostility of the Kashmir Muslims to the National Conference was well known by this time. The people had partly joined the Muslim Conference and partly they were coming under the influence of the progressive democratic forces represented by the Kashmir Socialist Party. If Ayyengar had proved eminently successful in his plan to turn the National Conference into a full-fledged branch of the Congress and the Nationalists into loyal subjects of the Dogra Ruler, he had miserably failed in deluding the people that the Nationalist leaders continued to be the revolutionaries and fighters for the freedom of the land. Ayyengar could not help the National Conference becoming unpopular and he himself became hateful both among the Muslims and the progressive classes in the State. No doubt he imparted strength and tone to the administration but by his partisanship for the Nationalists and distrust of Muslims he created distressing conditions in the State from the effects of which we have not yet been able to extricate ourselves.

The year of grace 1943 saw N.G. Ayyengar shaking in his high office. He was no more wanted in the State. It became known early in March that he had resigned and wanted to leave the country immediately. The reason of his unexpected relinquishment of office is a mystery which has not been unravelled up to this day. It was reported at the time that Jinnah made a complaint to the Viceroy that Ayyengar was playing mischief in State politics and on its basis the Imperial Govern-

ment dropped a hint to the Maharaja. I was told by Ayyengar's successor that the Maharaja did not like him and nourished several personal grievances against him. This much is certain that Ayyengar was loath to go but was forced by circumstances beyond his control to bid good-bye to the State. A few days before he left, the Dogra Hindus gave a farewell party to him on 12th March in Jammu where his services to the State were praised. That very day the leading journalists and newspapermen of Jammu and Kashmir held a Conference in the city. Prem Nath Bazaz was chosen to preside over it. In his address Bazaz bitterly criticised Ayyengar's regime for its short-sighted policy and narrow outlook. On the day Ayyengar left the State, Muslims organised a hostile demonstration and celebrated a day of deliverence.

Ayyengar was succeeded by Raja Maharaj Singh, a liberal politician, an experienced statesman and a man of noble culture and cosmopolitan tastes. His appointment was welcomed on all sides and Muslims felt jubilant over it.

Ayyengar's departure was a great blow to the Nationalists which they felt most acutely. Soon after Maharaj Singh's appointment was announced the annual session of the National Conference was held by the end of March at Mirpur, the stronghold of the Hindu money-lenders (Sahukars). To what extent the basis and the complexion of the organisation had undergone a change during the past three years could be guaged by the fact that the entire expenditure for the holding of the session was contributed by the *Sahukars*. The majority of the Reception Committee members was composed of them. It was not without good reason that the money-lending classes which were once counted among the fiercest enemies of the Freedom Movement in the State had come round to be the best admirers of the National Conference. The *Sahukars* wholeheartedly supported every proposal passed in the session.

Referring to the appointment of Raja Maharaj Singh as Premier of the State, Abdullah, who presided over the session, remarked that "it was another machination of the British to send a Christian, an alien, to our country to rule over us."

Because Maharaj Singh was a Christian, therefore he was also an alien ! This was and has continued to be the standard of nationalism, secularism and knowledge of the Nationalists.

Raja Maharaj Singh proved unorthodox in his ways. Though born of a high aristocratic family he behaved like a commoner even as a Prime Minister. Most of his time he spent making extensive tours throughout the Valley to come into touch with all classes and sections of the people. He was approachable to the poorest and the humblest of the citizens. He roamed about at odd hours in different parts of Srinagar and met men of the lowest classes and meanest professions to ascertain their needs, grievances and complaints. He paid surprise visits to the Government and semi-Government offices to see how the officialdom was functioning. He cut short the red tape of bureaucracy as much as he could.

Raja Maharaj Singh detested to employ underhand means in politics or encourage one party against another. He wanted to be fair to all the organisations among all the communities. He dissolved the Fuel and *Shali* Ration Committees immediately the truth about them was brought to his knowledge. Though, as subsequent events have proved, he was also pro-Congress, he used to say that as Prime Minister of the State it meant nothing to him which party was popular ; so far as he was concerned he would provide equal opportunity for all to function. And he kept his word till the last day that he remained in the State.

In absence of the governmental repression and oppression and with the fullest opportunity to work that was now available, the democratic forces began to rise and develop perceptibly within days. Ayyengar had refused permission for the publication of a daily edition of *The Hamdard*, the mouthpiece of the progressive sections in the State. Maharaj Singh secured the required consent of all the members of his Cabinet individually within 24 hours for this purpose, an achievement unknown in the working of the administration in Kashmir. He was sympathetic, considerate, and accommodating to the young State Press. He always overlooked the small faults and technical irregu-

larities of the newspapers. Even when told to do so by the Maharaja himself the generous Prime Minister refused to penalise a journal and thought only a verbal warning would meet the ends of justice. Maharaj Singh was of the opinion that the bickerings and clashes between the followers of the National Conference and Muslim Conference were very harmful for the progress of the country. He invited the representatives of both the parties on 17 June and tried his best to reconcile them. When he failed in his attempts he advised both the parties to function peacefully. Never before in the history of the Dogra Rule had people of Kashmir seen such a good-hearted, tolerant, far-sighted and progressive Prime Minister as Maharaj Singh. Had he remained in Kashmir for a fairly long period there can be no doubt that the subsequent history of the State would have been different from what it has been.

Maharaj Singh dazzled everybody with what he did. People accustomed to live under the lifeless bureaucratic administration could not decide whether they were dreaming or seeing things in real life. It was evident the Prime Minister had damaged the vested interests of many sections including the Nationalists. He had also given a rude shaking to the official class. Those harmed called him mad. To the Maharaja the Prime Minister's policy and method of work proved a dose too hard to digest. The ruler thought of applying a brake. The Prime Minister's proposals had to pass through several hands before they could reach the table of the Maharaja. Lady Maharaj Singh, wife of the Prime Minister, visited the women's hospital at Rainawari where she donated her own blood for a poor suffering village girl in need of it. The Maharaja, curiously enough, resented this and sent word that the Prime Minister and his wife should not mix too much with the common people. This was more than Raja Maharaj Singh had bargained for. He resigned and immediately left the State on 26 July only three months and seven days after his appointment. The light that had brightened the hopes of Kashmir people was extinguished.

Maharaj Singh's resignation had a parallel in Kashmir history in the relinquishment of office under almost similar circumstances by Albion Banerjee fourteen years earlier in March 1929. Lest history should repeat itself after the departure of Maharaj Singh, the reactionary well-wishers of the Dogra Rule inside and outside the country advised the Maharaja that the time had come when he should take steps to look closely into the various aspects of the administration with the aim of removing defects that might be found in it. It was also considered highly necessary that the excited and enraged people should be pacified by giving them some hopes and promises of all-round reforms in the constitutional government as well as in the administration before they get out of control. The Maharaja accordingly instituted a commission of enquiry under the presidentship of Chief Justice Sir Ganga Nath. This was done on 14th July twelve days before Maharaj Singh departed so that the effects of the popular Prime Minister's resignation may be counteracted and neutralised by the hopes which the institution of the Royal Commission was expected to arouse. Maharaj Singh was not even consulted by the Maharaja while mooting the proposal or in preparing the royal declaration.

The terms of reference of the Royal Commission were so clumsily drafted, so vague and complicated that on their very face it was quite clear that the enquiry would lead the country nowhere. Out of the twenty non-official members the majority belonged to the vested interests and reactionary classes. Of course there were two representatives of the National Conference, Afzal Beg and Ghulam Mohammed Sadiq, among the members. But neither the Muslim Conference nor the Socialist Party was allotted any seat in the Commission, though many other organisations of lesser importance were represented.

From the very outset the progressives were critical of the measure and frankly told the people that it was futile to pin their hopes on the outcome of the labours of the Commission. The Muslim Conference decided to non-cooperate with it. After prolonged deliberations on 18th and 19th August, the National-

ist leaders came to the conclusion that the Freedom Movement could be strengthened by supporting the declaration of the Maharaja and therefore the Working Committee of the National Conference adopted a resolution instructing Beg and Sadiq to participate in the enquiry of the Commission.

As if to undo the good work that Maharaj Singh did for the poor during the brief span of his office, the Maharaja appointed a notorious die-hard reactionary septuagenarian, Sir Kailas Narain Haksar, with a feudal outlook and wily designs to be incharge of the affairs in the State. Haksar had administered some of the very backward States of Rajputana for a number of years as Prime Minister. It was beyond his comprehension how the people of any native State could enjoy liberties as the Kashmiris did in 1943. His only ambition seemed to be to curtail these liberties to the maximum in order to lower Kashmiris to the level of the people of the Rajputana States. Besides, he wanted to make the Muslims feel and understand that they were living under Hindu rule where any pro-Muslim activities were intolerable and would be firmly suppressed. This was the service he wanted to render to the Maharaja and to this task he applied himself in right earnest. Oddly, (or perhaps not so oddly) the Nationalists were attracted towards Haksar from the very first day he took over as Prime Minister and before long became his friends and admirers.

The Muslim Conference decided to hold its annual session on 13th and 14th August in Srinagar. Haksar imposed humiliating restrictions including one that neither an outsider should participate in the deliberations nor should any speaker refer to outside politics. A month before the session, Nawab Bahadur Yar Jung, President of the All India States' Muslim League, had publicly expressed his intention of attending it. Accompanied by his wife he came on the notified day. The Government ordered him to quit and when he hesitated the Police arrested him and leaving his wife behind, carried him in a police van to Kohala, the border post on the J.V. Road. Before his arrest the Nawab had addressed a letter to the Prime Minister assuring him that he would remain a silent spectator at the session but this com-

munication was not even acknowledged. While the Haksar Government disallowed Nawab Bahadur Yar Jung to stay within the borders of the State, Tushar Kanti Ghosh, also an outsider but a Hindu, was put up as an honoured guest of the Revenue Minister. He delivered his inaugural address to the Editors Conference a few days later on 20th August upholding political ideology of *Akhand* Hindustan. Many speeches supporting Congress politics were also made by others in this Conference. There were vigorous protests on every side against this invidious distinction and the *Hamdard* wrote editorials forcefully and fearlessly criticising the partisan policy of the Government. The Daily also discussed the causes and the consequences of the resignation of Raja Maharaj Singh. Kailas Narain Haksar forthwith pressed the weapon of the Press Act into service and demanded a heavy security from the Daily thinking that in this way he would be able to smother the disloyal journal. *The Hamdard* issued an appeal to the people for funds and the Government no less than the reactionary and anti-democratic classes were surprised and dismayed to find that the full amount of the security was subscribed in small pieces of annas and rupees within the prescribed time and the Daily saved from assassination.

Haksar was not destined to rule over the State for a long time. A man with the out-dated ideas and archaic views could not prove successful where comparatively liberal and undoubtedly efficient Ayyengar had failed. That Haksar had to face hostility from the Muslims and the progressive democrats was but natural in the circumstances but nobody could imagine that this devotee at the shrine of reaction and communalism would unexpectedly come into clash with his spiritual allies, the Dogras.

There was scarcity of grains in Jammu; the hoarders and profiteers had cornered food stuffs and created famine conditions in the province. The hungry people were crying and appealing to the Government to take drastic steps to bring the culprits to book. But Haksar, busy in suppressing the forces of democracy and freedom, paid little heed to it. And when the famished crowd took out a procession on 24th September through

the streets of the city to express resentment and anger the Police resorted to indiscriminate firing killing nine people and wounding more than thirty. This roused the righteous indignation of the entire Dogra community, both Hindu and Muslim. The Kashmiris also expressed deepest sympathy with those who had suffered.

Haksar, now awakened from his slumber, realized that it was not an easy task to rule Kashmir ; post-haste he proceeded to Jammu to mollify the Dogras. The State Legislature was in session at Srinagar. The session was postponed as a recognition of the importance of Jammu happenings which demanded the immediate attention of the Ministers as well as the leaders of the people. For the first time under their own rule the Dogras had been slaughtered by the State police. There was great excitement and resentment. Both the Maharaja and the Maharani were perturbed. A commission of enquiry into the firing was instituted with Justice Gobind Madgaonkar, a judge of Bombay High Court, as president. But the reputation of Haksar was irreparably damaged. Maharaja Hari Singh could no longer have any faith in his Prime Minister's intelligence and efficiency to be at the head of the administration. He started a desperate hunt for a really capable man of well established reputation who could steer the ship of the State clear of all shoals and rocks during the stormy days that even the blind could see were ahead.

There were not many applicants for the post of the Prime Minister of Kashmir now. All the prospective candidates were scared by the reports of the reasons that led to the sensational resignation of Maharaj Singh and contemplated discharge of Kailas Narain Haksar. The State had fallen into disrepute. With great difficulty Maharaja Hari Singh was able to secure, through the assistance of the Government of India, the services of Sir Benegal N. Rao, a judge of the Calcutta High Court, who consented to take up the responsibilities as the new Prime Minister. But before doing so he visited the Valley and ascertained the real conditions for himself. It took Sir Benegal no less than four months to come to this decision. Meanwhile

unruffled Haksar vigorously pursued his anti-democratic and pro-Nationalist policy with undivided attention.

In September Saif Shah, an elected member of the State Assembly, died. Following in the footsteps of Ayyengar and despite persistent opposition from the people, Haksar nominated a Nationalist, Soofi Mohammed Akbar, as a member depriving the electorate in the constituency of their right to choose their own representative.

But the worse was yet to come. The despotic Haksar issued a fiat that no Muslim leader should make any speech of a political nature on the occasion of *Id* after the prayers as they were accustomed to do. Mir Waiz Usuf Shah obeyed but Abdullah flouted the orders and delivered a fiery speech at *Id Gah.* As usual Abdullah threatened, abused and challenged his opponents in the speech. But Haksar's Government did not stir and connived at this open defiance of law by the Nationalist leader. Protests were raised on all sides at this unabashed partisanship by the Authority and Ghulam Abbas issued a statement bitterly criticising the attitude of the Government. Haksar's defence was amusing. "The President of the National Conference delivered a most objectionable lengthy speech without securing any permission", admitted a press note which was issued by the Publicity Office of the Kashmir Government on 4th November 1943. "Action could be taken and can be taken against it. But at the suggestion of the Hon'ble Revenue Minister against whom the speech was directed nothing was done as he did not like that it should be pointed out that the case was launched on personal grounds". It was a clever way of permitting the Nationalists to take law into their own hands. Abdullah had abused in his speech not only the Revenue Minister but many other political leaders when, according to the Press note, there was ban on the holding of public meetings for purposes of political propaganda. The immunity enjoyed by the Nationalists was a part of the Government's policy.

Sir Benegal ultimately assumed charge in January 1944 Hope of improving his own delicate health in the salubrious climate and the enchanting and romantic scenery of the Valley

settled his wavering mind. Soon after Sir Benegal became the Prime Minister, he declared in a press conference that it was his desire to make Kashmir "a Model State". To achieve this great ambition needed many qualities of statesmanship. B. Narsingh Rao was a perfect gentleman, honest of purpose and noble at heart. Personally he remained scrupulously aloof from the factions in local politics and treated all parties, communities and classes equally fairly. He wanted to give freedom within the four corners of the law to all sections of the people to function and did not unnecessarily interfere in the affairs of the State Press.

Sir Benegal's training as a judge for a long time, however, proved both a merit and a drawback in him as the Head of Administration in Kashmir. Though it was not easy for any one to influence the Prime Minister by giving him one-sided exaggerated reports as the judge in him was keen to know and comprehend the various aspects of an issue, yet he was often hesitant to undertake any important work demanding urgent execution lest he might not have yet fully considered the matter. For this reason till the end of his tenure of office he failed to achieve anything substantial. His critics not infrequently hurled taunts and gibes at him because his "Model State" was nowhere in the process of emergence and the conditions of the State people continued as hopeless as they were before he came.

In 1944 political prospects had become quite dreary for the Congress in India and, because of it, for the Nationalists in Kashmir also. The British authorities had been successful in suppressing the Quit India Movement. Since December 1942 after the landing of American forces in North Africa the fate of the Second World War had definitely turned in favour of the Allies and in 1944 the final victory was in sight. It appeared that the solution of the Indian problem of Independence would not be made according to the sweet will of the Congress leaders who claimed to be the sole representatives of the Indian nation. It was certain that the spokesmen of all classes and communities would be consulted no less than the leaders of the Congress. Jinnah had by his extraordinary political acumen

and sagacity considerably raised his own prestige and made the Muslim League a powerful organisation which alone could deliver goods on behalf of the Indian Muslims.

In this changed political climate the Nationalist leaders of Kashmir, quite baffled about the future, decided to make friends with the Muslim League and accept the overlordship of Quaide Azam Jinnah. They however adopted a wrong method of approach which frustrated their plan and worsened their position in the State.

One after another, emissaries of the National Conference went during the months of March and April 1944, from Srinagar to New Delhi to wait upon Jinnah with the prayer that he may arbitrate in the issue between the two parties of Kashmir Muslims—the National Conferencites and the Muslim Conferencites. Sheikh Abdullah, president of the National Conference, and Mohammed Sayid, general secretary, also went to Lahore and implored the League President to intervene in Kashmir affairs. The astute Quaide Azam was the last man to be unwilling or hesitant to grasp the opportunity that presented itself to Muslimise the nationalistic State politics. And when the Muslim Conference leaders also approached him with a similar request he only too willingly accepted to do this bit of service to the cause of Islam. Both the parties invited the League President to visit Kashmir and study the problem on the spot. On 6 May Jinnah sent a telegram to Abbas informing him of his decision to leave for Kashmir and advised him to apprise Abdullah and Mir Waiz Usuf of the programme.

Jinnah reached Jammu on 9 May. He was accompanied by his sister. Arrangements for the reception of the League President had been made from the borders of the State right up to Srinagar. In Jammu only the Muslim Conferencites took part in the function as no Hindus participated in it and there were no Nationalist Muslims in that city. From Banihal, where the Kashmir Province begins, Nationalists vied with the supporters of the Muslim Conference in giving a grand ovation to Jinnah. At places there were scuffles, ugly scenes and many people were injured. In a clash at Khanabal while the honour-

ed guest was having tea with Abbas, Mir Waiz Usuf, Beg and Bakhshi in the Dak Bungalow, teeth of one Mohammed Ismail Sheikh, a worker of the Muslim Conference, were broken by the Nationalist volunteers and he was shown to Jinnah in that condition.

Jinnah and the party reached Srinagar at 6.30 p.m. on 10 May. Immediately after arrival, the League leader was presented with addresses of welcome at two places where thousands of people had gathered to hear him. In the Pratap Park meeting which was held under the auspices of the National Conference, Abdullah, claiming to represent the forty lakhs ot State Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, welcomed Jinnah whom he addressed as "the beloved leader of the Muslims of India". Jinnah took the fullest advantage of the moment. "Even kings can feel proud at the warmth of welcome you have given me," observed he in reply. He added : "But this reception is not meant for my person ; it is meant for the All India Muslim League of which I am the President. By it you have honoured the Muslims of India who are organised under the Muslim League" Clearly this was a hint to the Nationalists of what was to come from Jinnah as arbitrator. The matter became still more clear when a few minutes later Jinnah, replying to the second address of welcome presented on behalf of the Muslim Conference in a public meeting at Drugjan, advised the State Muslims that they should remain solidly united. "If your objective is one then your voice will become one. I am a Muslim and my all sympathies are for the Muslim cause," he told the audience.

Jinnah stayed in Srinagar for more than two months. He refused to give any verdict in haste. He gave a patient hearing to the prominent leaders of both the parties including Abdullah, G.M. Sadiq, Mohammed Sayid, Afzal Beg, Ahmed Yar, Ghulam Abbas, Mir Waiz Usuf and many others. He also met certain eminent public men including Hindu politicians, outside the ranks of the leaders of the two parties. He discussed State affairs and the issue of the partition of India with Prem Nath Bazaz in two lengthy interviews on 28 May and 29 June. He

studied all available literature on Kashmir and regularly read some leading local newspapers including *The Daily Hamdard.*

Jinnah finally gave his award at midnight on 17 June, 1944, in a speech which he delivered to a very big Muslim audience. The annual session of the Muslim Conference was held at the Muslim Park outside Jama Masjid on 16th and 17th June. At the end of the session certain Muslim organisations presented a joint address to the League leader and it was in reply to it that Jinnah made the historic pronouncement. "I have patiently heard the arguments of the Muslim leaders of the National Conference. It is not for me to bring any pressure upon them because the State politics is different from the politics of British India," declared he. "But as a Muslim I must say what I feel is the right way for the Muslims. So far as I have been able to understand the viewpoint of the Muslim leaders of the National Conference, I do not think that they can succeed". Jinnah revealed that "the leaders of the National Conference had assured him that the National Conference is the party of the Muslims ; that their goal, policy and programme are the same as that of the Muslim Conference ; that they fight for the welfare of the Muslims and that if the State Hindus and Sikhs co-operate with them well and good, if not they (the Nationalist Muslims) did not mind". Jinnah did not approve of this method and advised the State Muslims in these words :

> "You should awaken and instil life in the dead bones of the Muslim Nation. This goal cannot be attained without unity. With one objective in view you should establish one platform and one organisation and rally round one banner".

The Muslim League leader did not want to leave the State Muslims in doubt about the particular organisation he recommended. He concluded his speech by saying :

> "99 per cent of the Muslims who met me are of the opinion that Muslim Conference alone is the representative organisation of the State Muslims".

Had the Nationalists possessed any power of understanding political issues and had they not been opportunists and fortune-hunters it should not have been very difficult for them to foresee what the verdict of the League President would be. This was the only judgment that Jinnah could have passed

over the issue and he need not have been invited to Kashmir to deliver it. He came and stayed in the Valley to study the problem simply to give an appearance of seriousness to the whole affair. Even if the large majority of the State Muslims had been adhering to the National Conference in 1944, Jinnah would have been quite unwilling to make a public admission to that effect. The National Conference was still the best organised party but it had already fallen in the eyes of State Muslims partly because of rapid change in the political outlook of the Indian Muslims and partly due to the misdeeds of the Nationalists. So it was simply asking for the moon to hope that the Muslim League President would accept the representative character of the National Conference in State politics.

Naively enough the Nationalists were upset and infuriated by the publicly pronounced devastating verdict of Jinnah. Not unnaturally they thought they had committed suicide by voluntarily accepting the League President as the arbitrator. The binding however was only moral and no legal value could be attached to it. So to undo the mischief public meetings were arranged in different "safe" zones of the city to oppose the "anti-democratic" and "anti-State" observations of Jinnah. Abdullah was the principal speaker in all these meetings. Never have filthier words been said by any responsible man against his opponents in Kashmir than were expressed by Abdullah in these speeches. In one of the demogogic utterances he warned Jinnah, on 20 June at Khanyar, to leave Kashmir. "If Jinnah does not give up the habit of interfering in our politics it will be difficult for him to go back in an honourable manner". Jinnah left on 24 July by J. V. Road. At Baramulla on 25 July Muslims presented him with an address in a public meeting where a Nationalist worker, Maqbool Sherwani, attempted to kick up a row but with the intervention of the State police the function ended without any untoward incident. At Muzaffarabad both Muslims and Sikhs accorded a grand reception to him in a function which was attended by thousands of men and women.

More important than the verdict on the representative

character of the National Conference and the Muslim Conference and certainly of historical value was the parting statement of Jinnah which he issued on the 24th July on the day of his departure. Perhaps there is no other pronouncement of the Father of Pakistan on the State politics which is as weighty as this. "I have been here for some time and I have seen all classes of people, and had the opportunity of hearing various views, and also Press reports and criticisms, some of which were unkind and unjust, but on the whole I am very thankful for the kindness that was shown to me, especially by the Mussalmans," said Jinnah. Referring to politics he stated:

> "As I said at the moment I reached Jammu, it is not the policy of the Muslim League to interfere with the internal administration of this State or the grave and serious issues that face the Maharaja and his Government, as between him and his people, but we are certainly very deeply concerned with the welfare of the Mussalmans in the State, and I must say that even a casual visitor cannot but be shocked to see the condition of the people in this State, even in matters of their elementary needs and necessities. Sir B. N. Rao has just taken charge as the Prime Minister of the State, and now the people are looking up to him and expecting that he will take effective measures for their betterment."

Of tremendous importance were Jinnah's following remarks which, we shall see, the Maharaja and his Government ignored at their own peril:

> "As regards the Mussalmans, as I said, we are vitally concerned with their welfare, but I regret that although Sheikh Abdullah and his party and the Muslim Conference discussed matters with me in Delhi and in Lahore before my arrival here, and were good enough to accord me a great reception, and were anxious that I should hear both sides and bring about a settlement, when I, after careful consideration, suggested that the Mussalmans should organize themselves under one flag and on one platform, not only my advice was not acceptable to Sheikh Abdullah but, as is his habit, which has become a second nature with him, he indulged in all sorts of language of a most offensive and vituperative character in attacking me. My advice to the Mussalmans is that the differences can only be resolved by argument, discussion, exchange of views, and reason, and not by *goondaism* and one thing that I must draw the attention of the Kashmir Government about is that *goondaism* must be put down at any cost, and there should be a constitutional liberty of speech and freedom of thought, which is the elementary right of every citizen under any civilized form of government."

The visit of the Muslim League President and his activi-

ties in the Valley with the crowning incident at the Muslim Park meeting where the important verdict was delivered, gave a great fillip to the movement for the resurgence of the communalist politics in the State. It further weakened the National Conference.

CHAPTER TWELVE

RISE OF DEMOCRATIC FORCES

THE Jinnah episode did not make the Nationalists wiser. They had been orphaned. Hindus outside as well as inside the State had begun to suspect them. And the Muslims were alienated. The forceful and unequivocal language employed by the League leader in the statement which he issued on the day of his departure had made it plain that there could be no friendship with Jinnah unless the Nationalists were prepared to go before him in sack cloth and ashes. But the alternative of cementing the alliance with the Hindus was still there. Only it would be necessary, after the flirtation with the League President, to furnish more substantial proofs of loyalty to the Dogra Rule before the confidence of the Hindus could be restored. This the Nationalists were prepared to do with all their heart. And a very suitable occasion came handy.

On 22 July 1944 Maharaja Hari Singh returned from Europe where he had been touring for sometime. The reactionary Hindu advisers of the Government considered it the best opportunity to test the loyalty of the N^tionalists. Never before had the fighters for freedom participated in any public reception to the Maharaja since 1931. The Nationalists were only too willing to alter the previous decision and take an eager part in the public demonstration of sentiments of loyalty. But would the Muslims co-operate ? The reactionary Hindus and the Dogra Government proceeded cautiously in the matter.

It speaks of the inefficiency, timidity and short-sightedness of the Muslim Conference leaders that they could not derive any advantage out of the consequences of the bombshell which Jinnah had thrown on the citadel of nationalism. They were perfectly complacent and thought that the Nationalists had been crushed by Jinnah's verdict and could never rise again. What is worse, when the Nationalists decided to whole-

heartedly participate in the public reception to the Maharaja, they were afraid that their non-cooperation would prove suicidal. Incredibly enough within a week after Jinnah's departure the Muslim Conference leaders were rivalling the Nationalist leaders in making huge preparations to receive the Maharaja in a procession through the streets of Srinagar. Jinnah's verdict seemed to have been wiped out of memory and the country was pulsating with the sentiments of loyalty towards the throne of the alien Hindu ruler.

For three days the Maharaja hesitated to receive the public ovation. However at the persistent requests of all the Muslim leaders he ultimately condescended to pass through the main streets of the city on the 31st July 1944. It must have been the happiest day for the alien prince to see how the leaders of the National Conference were vying with the leaders of the Muslim Conference to demonstrate their deep sentiments of faithfulness, obedience and loyalty towards his person. The whole city had been gaily bedecked with festoons, arches, garlands, mottoes and flowers. It was a sight for gods to see how Abdullah, once the symbol of revolution and struggle against despotism, was personally supervising the arrangements for beautifying the Mujahid Manzil, the headquarters of the National Conference, which stood on the way through which the royal procession of the Dogra autocrat was to pass.

Many prominent Nationalist leaders were present at the spot who, under the leadership of Abdullah, raised the full-throated slogan "*Maharaja Bahadur ki Jai*" as the procession slowly wended its way.

The event did not pass off peacefully. There were scuffles between the followers of the two organisations before and after the procession in which even the tallest leader fully participated.

The totally unexpected but grand success of the function in the city heartened the reactionaries. The Maharaja therefore toured the Valley during the first week of August receiving tremendous applause and ovation from the followers of both, the Muslim Conference and the National Conference, in every town

and village through which he passed. The folly of the Muslim Conference leaders turned the victory of Jinnah into a failure. Reaction was completely triumphant and this was what the Nationalists and the supporters of the Dogra Government had jointly planned to achieve. Hindus and the Congressmen were now anxious to rehabilitate the damaged reputation of Abdullah and his colleagues in the Nationalist India. A lie was sedulously spread that Jinnah had gone uninvited to Kashmir to persuade the Muslim leaders of the National Conference to own the two-nation theory of the Muslim League but had returned totally disappointed. Vigorous efforts were made to prove that Abdullah was the unswerving follower of Gandhian Nationalism by conviction and the staunchest ally of the Congress.

Meanwhile the Royal Commission had been trodding its weary way and proving a big joke which the Maharaja had played on the people. Apart from its defective and unsatisfactory terms of reference, the Commission suffered from the circumscribed mentality of the majority of its members particularly of its President. The time had come when nothing less than the grant of the unconditional right of self-determination to the Kashmir people could have brought the alien Maharaja nearer to his Muslim subjects. But this was the very thing that every person whom the Maharaja chose to appoint his adviser told him not to do. The advisers came forth with various palliatives to treat the cankerous growth that was eating into the vitals of State politics but all had this one factor in common; they denied the people freedom to decide their future and forge their own fate.

The partition of India had become a burning issue. In the correspondence between Jinnah and Rajgopalachari that had been published in the Press while the League President was in Kashmir, the eminent Congress leader had conceded the creation of Pakistan comprising of the provinces and parts of provinces where the majority of the people was Muslim. Yet on 6 June, 1944, Justice Ganga Nath, President of the Royal Commission, angrily told Agha Sher Ali, a member, in a public sitting that "to talk of Pakistan in Kashmir is sedition". There was

howl and cry in a section of the State Press over the observation and the Muslims became hopeless about the outcome of the labours of the commission. Sensing that the commission had become unpopular, the Nationalists also decided to non-cooperate and withdrew from it Beg and Sadiq, their members. While doing so they submitted to the Maharaja a comprehensive plan for the economic, social, political and cultural reconstruction of the State. The plan was subsequently published and has come to be known as "New Kashmir" Manifesto. The National Conference held its annual session on the 29 and 30 September at Sopore. The delegates to the session unanimously adopted "New Kashmir" as the objective of the Nationalist Party.

The "New Kashmir" Manifesto was divided into two parts (i) The Constitution of the State and (ii) The National Economic Plan. The first part was further subdivided into several sections including (a) Citizenship (b) National Assembly (c) Council of Ministers (d) Ruler (e) Justice (f) Local Administration ; and (g) National Language. In the section for citizenship the people of Jammu and Kashmir State were guaranteed "Freedom of the Press", "Freedom of assembly and meetings" and "Freedom of street processions and demonstrations". The manifesto declared that the "privacy of home and secrecy of correspondence of the citizens shall not be violated except in accordance with law". Every citizen would be obliged to train himself to use and, would be ensured the right, to bear arms. Universal compulsory military service would be established by law. All citizens would have the right to work, that is, the right to receive guaranteed work and the right to rest. Other notable features of the draft Constitution of the State were:

(a) All students shall have the right to education.
(b) Women citizens shall be accorded equal rights with men in all fields of national life; economic, cultural, political and in the State services.
(c) All children born in the State shall be ensured equality of opportunity irrespective of accidents of birth and parentage.
(d) All citizens shall be secured protection by the law

and recourse to the courts through an administration of justice which shall be quick, cheap and impartial.

(e) The highest legislature of the State, the National Assembly, is to be elected by citizens of the State by electoral districts on the basis of one deputy per 40,000 population, for a period of five years.

(f) The Council of the Ministers of the State is to be responsible to the National Assembly.

(g) Women shall have the right to elect and to be elected upon equal terms with men in all institutions of the State.

(h) Justice shall be administered by the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and by the district and tehsil people's courts.

(i) The organs of State power in the districts, tehsils, cities and villages, shall be the people's panchayats.

(j) The national languages of the State shall be Kashmiri, Dogri, Balti (Pali), Dardi, Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu. Urdu shall be the *lingua franca* of the State.

The National Economic Plan was sub divided into (i) Production (ii) Transport (iii) Distribution (iv) Utility services and (v) Currency and Finance. The production was to be for use and not for exchange and the objective was to provide a reasonable standard of living for all people in the Jammu and Kashmir State. The basic principles of agricultural plan would be (i) abolition of landlordism (ii) land to the tiller (iii) co-operative association (iv) feeding the State people first and (v) people's control of the forests. A National Agricultural Council would be set up in the State to execute and supervise the national agricultural plan.

The Manifesto declared that the National Conference stands for the principle that all key industries must be in the hands of the people's government and therefore enumerated the following basic principles :

(1) Abolition of the big private capitalist.

(2) All key industries to be managed and owned by the democratic State.

(3) Private monopoly, whether formal or virtual, to be forbidden.

In order to direct, supervise and control the industrial effort along the lines of the national plan a National Industrial Council was to be set up.

Since one of the chief reasons for the backwardness of the State is the primitive nature of communications in all outlying areas, the Manifesto said "that any big plan for the regeneration of the country must plan a simultaneous development of the means of communication and transport". The establishment of a National Communications Council consisting of engineering experts and economic advisers was to be set up who would execute the plan in consultation with the Agricultural and Industrial Councils.

Emphasis was laid on the realisation that "distribution is a vital corner stone of any planned economy and that evils of industrialisation can and should be avoided if there is to be any equitable system of distribution". Every working man, woman and child in the State "was guaranteed freedom from want but no parasite was to be granted a share in consumption goods". The National Marketing Council consisting of business experts and economic advisers was to execute the distribution plan.

The safeguarding of the health of the citizens of the State was to be the primary duty of the State. With that purpose in view national councils were to be set up for public health education and housing. The National Public Health Council constituted of the most efficient doctors and surgeons of the State along with economic advisers, would ensure widespread and efficient health services on the basis of (a) one doctor for every 1500 of the population (b) every village to have a medical attendance and first aid post (c) establishment of a State medical college and (d) encouragement to indigenous systems of medicine both *Ayurvedic* and *Yunani*. The National Educational Council consisting of educationists of standing was to prepare a scheme of State education containing proposals for creation of a (a) national university laying special stress on tradition and history, (b) a statistical institute, (c) an institute

of nationalities, (d) a network of higher, middle and primary schools, (e) district colleges for men and women students and (f) adult education night schools. "The National Housing Council consisting of engineers, public health experts, architects and economic advisers would prepare a programme of town and village planning with special reference to housing so that benefits of modern science, design and sanitation may be brought into the homes of workers and peasants of the State". The Manifesto declared that "it is the plan of the National Conference to encourage our common culture, which includes the culture of all nationalities resident in the State by a many-sided plan of development" through (a) establishment of a radio station in the Kashmiri language (b) establishment of a national film industry and national theatre (c) encouragement of youth activity (d) the protection and development of ancient monuments of historical interest, and (e) the establishment of an institute of art and culture.

Banking was to be nationalised and the currency to be regulated strictly ona national basis. With that purpose in view the National Economic Council consisting of bankers and financial experts was to draw up the financial plans of the State to (a) provide necessary funds for all productive organisations (b) regulate the price level and (c) fix the total wage-bill. The money-lenders and usurers were to be put in the category of social parasities "who have no place in planned economy".

To the Plan were attached three charters, first for peasants, second for workers and a third for women enumerating and guaranteeing their respective economic, political, legal, cultural and social rights.

This, in brief, is the "New Kashmir" Manifesto of the Nationalists which they submitted to the Maharaja some time after they decided to boycott the Royal Commission and withdraw their nominees from it. It was an interesting though thoughtlessly drafted document, envisaging the establishment of a communist State yet, opportunistically enough, it guaranteed the perpetuation of the alien Dogra rule in Kashmir and gave the Maharaja a solemn assurance that he would continue to exercise

the right of general control over the administration of the State. While publishing the Manifesto for the information of the people Abdullah in a foreword expressed the hope that "in our New Kashmir we shall build again the men and women of our State who have been dwarfed for centuries of servitude, and create a people worthy of our glorious motherland".

Sir Ganga Nath, President of the Royal Commission, submitted his own report to the Maharaja by the end of October because all other members without exception, refused to sign it when he asked them to do so on the 27th October as he would not allow them to discuss it before affixing their signatures. The report was quietly shelved and never saw the light of the day. Probably that was the only wise thing to do. The findings and the recommendations which became known to some of the ever watchful news ferrets, were such as could never have satisfied even the most moderate sections of Kashmiris.

The meteoric rise of Jinnah and the growing popularity among the Muslims of his two-nation theory as well as of the demand for partition of the subcontinent made Hindu politicians in British India worried over the future of Kashmir. Among them was Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru on whom Maharaja Hari Singh relied most for advice in constitutional and political matters. Even that liberal no-party politician thought that it would be dangerous to lose more time beating about the bush and that the National Conference and the Dogra Government must come closer and become friends to defend the country against the on-rushing tide of Muslim communalism on the one hand and the democratic forces on the other. A plan of diarchy was therefore prepared and suddenly announced on 2nd October, 1944, according to which two of the posts of Ministers, one a Hindu and another a Muslim, were to be given to such persons who could command the confidence of the State Legislature. In that Legislature thirty-five out of seventy-five members were nominated by the Maharaja. Out of the forty elected members seven were chosen by *jagirdars*, landlords and Government pensioners and eleven were elected by Hindu and Sikh constituencies. There were only eight members of the National Conference, all Muslim.

The other Muslim members either belonged to the Muslim Conference Party or were independents. There was thus not a ghost of a chance for a candidate of either the National Conference or the Muslim Conference to be chosen as a Minister unless he had the fullest backing of the Government. And after appointment what would be the role of the "popular" Minister except to give moral and constitutional support to the alien Dogra Government in all its acts of suppression, repression and oppression? The Dogra Raj in 1944 was in sore need of such a prop without which it was tottering.

From the beginning it was obvious whom the Maharaja desired to take. The Nationalists could not conceal their jubilation in anticipation of the election by the Assembly. Though the lure of office was difficult to resist, the leaders of the Muslim Conference after many days of "yes" and "no" finally decided to boycott the elections. The political workers of progressive outlook firmly advocated non-cooperation with the reforms from the very outset. *The Hamdard* wrote half a dozen editorials exposing the conspiracy that lay hidden behind the move to dynamite the citadel of revolution in the State.

The Legislative Assembly elected a panel of six members who were recommended for the two posts of Ministers. It needs mention that the leader of the National Conference Party in the Assembly from September, 1934, the very day of the birth of the Legislature, was Mian Ahmed Yar. For reasons best known to the Working Committee of the National Conference not he but his deputy, Afzal Beg, was nominated as candidate of the Nationalist Party for election. Mian Ahmed Yar, not unnaturally, felt disgraced but did not make any public complaint at the time and continued to lead the Party inside the Legislature. Out of the panel of six candidates Maharaja Hari Singh appointed, on the 19th October, 1944, Afzal Beg, the nationalist and Ganga Ram, an ultra-loyalist Dogra politician, as his Public Works Minister and Home Minister respectively. The Nationalists were amply recompensed for their loyalty or perhaps it would be more appropriate to say, for their treachery to the Freedom Movement.

RISE OF DEMOCRATIC FORCES

There were great rejoicings in the Nationalist circles on the appointment of Afzal Beg as a Minister to the Maharaja. In the public meeting which was held in Gol Bagh on the 19th October Abdullah introduced not only Beg as the representative of the Freedom Movement but, oddly enough, also Ganga Ram, who had till the very day consistently and vigorously opposed all demands for liberalisation or democratisation of the administration. For several days the Nationalist leaders went about the Valley carrying Ganga Ram with them and telling people that with the appointment of the two Ministers the revolution for which they were strenuously labouring, had triumphed.

The acceptance of office by the Nationalists might have satiated their hunger for power but it exposed all their claims of progressivism. The New Kashmir Manifesto became a mockery and a laughing-stock of the people. All the elements which opposed the National Conference in the country particularly among the Muslims, began to become stronger and stronger day by day. Boycott of the elections in the Legislature to the two posts of the Ministers restored the Muslim Conference to a popular position to a considerable extent. Public memory is proverbially weak and the loyalist demonstrations of the Muslim Conference leaders were more or less forgotten by the people.

In the beginning of 1945 the disaffection against the anti-national and anti-democratic activities of the National Conference became very widespread. People wanted to express their resentment and demonstrate their anger. It so happened that *Id Milad*, the birthday of Prophet Mohammed, fell in March. It was decided that a procession be carried out through the principle streets of Srinagar under the auspices of the Muslim Conference on the 16th March to observe the festival. Everybody, including the sponsors, expected it to be an ordinary affair. But what a huge demonstration it proved to be ! Never before in the history of the city had people witnessed such a long procession with such extraordinary enthusiasm in those who participated and held banners and placards in their hands. It took the procession three hours to pass a certain point.

The 16th March, 1945, is another important day in the annals of the Freedom Movement in the State. On this day the revolutionary masses rose spontaneously to hold the banner of freedom aloft in their hands after they had felt convinced that the Nationalists had betrayed them. It was comparable to the demonstration which the masses had held on the 23rd September, 1931, of which mention has been made in an earlier chapter of this book. It is said that the demonstrators on the 16th March were Muslim communalists imbued with religious zeal. I do not agree. True, the sponsors of the procession were the leaders of the Muslim Conference, but it left no doubt in the minds of those who saw it that the participants were people owning all shades of opinion, though united like one man in their detestation of the atrocities of the Nationalists and the partisan spirit of the Maharaja's Government. The celebrations of the *Id Milad* served only a cover. There were hundreds of placards bearing political slogans condemning high-handedness, corruption and treachery. There were many flags of other colours along with thousands of green banners. The slogans raised gave the whole show more of a political complexion than a religious one.

The leaders of the Kashmir Socialist Party toured the Valley in the spring and established branches at Badgam, Anant nag, Sopore, Kulgam, Shopian, Tral, Bandipur and other towns. The main task of this organisation still continued to be dissemination of scientific knowledge on economic, political and social problems confronting the State and the world at large. But since the party had a powerful weapon in the shape of the popular *The Daily Hamdard* at their disposal, the ideology of socialism, and democracy was becoming known to literate classes in all nooks and corners of the Valley.

By the summer of 1945, it was clear that Sir B.N. Rao had become misfit in the post of Head of the Administration in Kashmir. Despite his nobility of character and justice-loving nature, he had belied the expectation of the Maharaja and the hopes of the State people. He had enjoyed his stay in Kashmir to the fullest and completely recouped his health. Whether

he wanted to relinquish office or not, there was one ambitious man at the right hand of the Maharaja who had been scheming for many years to get the coveted job of the Prime Minister. Now he saw his chance to get in. With two "popular" Ministers in the State Council, it looked odd that the Prime Minister should be a non-State subject besides being entirely a creature of the ruler. So the Maharaja was persuaded to appoint Rai Bahadur Ram Chandra Kak, a Kashmir Pandit of the Valley, as his Prime Minister. Kak had started his life as a librarian of a local college and had by dint of hard work, intelligence and craftiness risen to the post of the Minister-in-Waiting of the Maharaja. He became the Head of the Administration in place of Sir B.N. Rao on 28th June 1945. The appointment was hailed by the Nationalist leaders in a rally of workers which was held in Mujahid Manzil on the 29th June. But knowing his antecedents, his views on politics and his hostility to the Freedom Movement, the Socialists maintained a critical attitude. The Muslim Conference held its 13th annual session in Poonch under the presidentship of Mir Waiz Usuf Shah on 1,2 and 3 July. The main theme of the speeches in the session was disapproval of the appointment of Kak as Prime Minister. He was dubbed as the "worst enemy of Muslims", "notorious administrator" and "unpopular figure". The session denounced diarchical system of Government, demanded establishment of a completely responsible ministry and assured non-Muslims of a fair and generous treatment at the hands of Muslims.

As was expected the aims and objects of the new Council of Ministers did not in any way differ from its predecessors. There was no change whatsoever in the policy of the Government excepting that the Maharaja with ample plausibility claimed that he had the support of the people in all that he or his Government did. Beg remained in the Government for one year and five months and during this whole period the unjust laws and regulations regarding *jagirdari*, landlordism, recruitment in Army, possession of fire arms, cow-slaughter, inheritance and others of similar iniquitous nature continued to be in force. Even the Government orders about medium of

instruction and its script stood uncancelled. Not only that. New laws to suppress people and burden them with more taxes were promulgated with the approval of the "popular" Ministers. Only in one thing Nationalist Beg was eminently successful. He got a large number of his relatives, friends and acquaintances appointed on high and low government jobs; he gave large and lucrative contracts to those whom he liked. To this the Maharaja and his Government had no objection so long as the Nationalist Minister supported their policy on basic issues.

Afzal Beg is a resident of Anantnag. While he was in power the local Co-operative Bank and the Co-operative Stores came to be in the grip of the Beg family. The distribution and sale the necessities of life such as sugar, salt, kerosene oil, cloth, etc., were controlled and distributed among the people of the tehsil through the agency of the Co-operative Stores. Not even a part of the goods meant for the lakhs of peasants reached them. Most of the supplies, it was alleged, was sold in the black market by the Nationalist management of the Co-operative Stores. This sent a wave of resentment in the peasantry.

In 1945 the whole country-side in the Valley was simmering with discontent. The economic and social conditions of the tillers of the soil had always been pretty bad but the control on the necessities of life such as sugar, salt, cloth and kerosene oil and the corrupt nature of those who were responsible for their distribution made it worse. In the Anantnag tehsil, conditions became simply intolerable. On 19th of July about a dozen Kashmiris met in the Achhabal Garden with the purpose of discussing the situation and finding some ways and means to fight against the tyranny of those who were instrumental in making life unbearable for the peasants and other working classes living in the country-side. Among other things it was decided in this meeting that an organisation be formed to defend and safeguard the rights and interests of the peasants in the State. Its name was to be the All Jammu and Kashmir Kisan Conference. The meeting unanimously elected Abdus Salam Yatu, a matriculate young peasant of village Khushipora, as President. A written document recording the proceedings of

the meeting with an oath to be true and loyal to the new organization was drawn up and signed by all the members present.

The news of the meeting spread like wild fire first through Brang, Shahabad and Kuthar and then in hundreds of hamlets of Anantnag district. Within days Kisan committees began to be formed in big villages of the district. Before long these committees were looked upon as rivals by the leaders of the National Conference. No news about the formation of the Kisan Conference or the village committees was published in the Nationalist papers. Instructions were sent from Mujahid Manzil, that the High Command utterly disliked the growth of the peasant movement outside the precincts of the National Conference. In order to warn the peasants against participation in the peasant rising without the approval of the High Command, a batch of Nationalist leaders including Ghulam Nabi and Hakim Mohammed Amin Qureshi, was despatched immediately to the spot. It was 16 November, the day of *Id*. There is a holy shrine at Kabamarg, a village seven miles to the south of Anantnag. No less than twenty five thousand Muslims had gathered here to offer prayers. Among the devotees this year were the leaders of the Kisan movement besides the Nationalist workers. When the prayers were over, Qureshi ascended the dais to read *khutba*. Instead of delivering any religious discourse he started to chide the Kisan leaders and deride the peasant movement. Before he had uttered half a dozen sentences, a few Kisan workers stood on their feet and asked him to desist from casting aspersions on the popular leaders of the working class. Qureshi ignored the warning of the ill-clad, odd-looking, rebellious peasants and persisted in abusing the new-rising leadership by calling them illiterate, upstart and mean. This proved a signal which started a storm. Qureshi was thrown down from the dais and was bruised. The whole mass of people was now on their feet and a melee ensued in which all the Nationalist workers were badly handled along with many other innocent inhabitants of the Anantnag town who happened to be in the gathering With great diffi-

culty and at the intercession of the Kisan leaders did the workers of the National Conference escape with their lives. Next day sixteen leaders of the Kisan Conference including Abdus Salam Yatu, president, Habib Ullah, vice-president, Ghulam Ahmad Naz, general secretary, were implicated by the police and prosecutions were launched against them for taking part in a riot.

The incident at Kabamarg made the Nationalist leaders very apprehensive but it put more enthusiasm and vigour in the Kisan workers. The Kisan movement began to extend from day to day. Till November, that is when the movement was only four months old, forty-five Kisan committees had sprung into life and hundreds of workers were functioning actively like missionaries for a cause. The speeches of the Kisan leaders were regularly reported in the few independent papers at Srinagar. These speeches made it increasingly clear that bitter experience in life had made many Kisan leaders move away from narrow-minded communalism and short-sighted nationalism. No doubt they were still vague about their objective. Most of them were attributing all the misfortunes of the peasantry to the machination and malice of city-dwellers but instinctively they also put their finger not infrequently at the sore point. For these reasons the Socialists began to evince keen interest in the movement and by the end of the year, *The Daily Hamdard* vigorously espoused its cause.

The necessity for the formation of an alliance between the peasant leadership and the Socialist Party, the two progressive and democratic forces in the Valley, was felt on either side. A joint meeting of the top leaders of both parties was therefore arranged to exchange views on the objective of a democratic revolution in the State and the problems facing the country. The meeting was held in Srinagar on 24th March, 1946, and twenty-six leaders attended it. Prominent among those who took part in the deliberations were Abdus Salam Yatu, Habib Ullah Shah, Kanhaya Lal Kaul, Noor Mohammed, Prem Nath Bazaz, Mohammed Akram, Jagan Nath Sathu, Ghulam Ahmad Naz, Azad Kamal, Prithvi Nath Butt, Asad Ullah Rishi, Ghulam Mohammed Parey and Abdul Subhan.

The meeting lasted for more than eleven hours. Every problem was frankly thrashed out. The leaders decided to hold a congress of the working classes of Kashmir in Kabamarg on 11, 12 and 13 May. No decisions were therefore adopted about the basic and the fundamental issues of the movement which were postponed to be decided by the congress itself. To make suitable preparations for the congress it was agreed that a convention of the prominent workers be held at Dyalgam on the 7th April.

The British Cabinet Mission which was exploring the possibilities of a solution of the Indian problem had declared that the future of Indian States was the concern of the rulers. The meeting took strong objection to this view and decided to submit a memorandum to the Mission demanding that while determining the future of the States, the opinion of the people living in the States and not the views of the rulers should be given weight. The Srinagar meeting brought the intellectuals and the working classes quite near each other by the clarification of ideas and ideologies. The two wings of the fighting forces were supplementary to each other and when they joined hands the combination thus formed became a complete whole. By this happy alliance the Freedom Movement received a fillip and when the convention met at Dyalgam, a village three miles distant from Anantnag it proved to be a tremendous success.

More than two hundred delegates from every part of Anantnag district and a few from other regions of the Valley came to participate in the discussions and deliberations of the political, economic and social problems of the State. Unusual enthusiasm was in evidence in the small village of Dyalgam in which not only the adult male population took a proud part; even women and children were seen giving a friendly ovation to the delegates as they streamed in on foot, in motor cars, on horseback or in tongas. The convention lasted for two days. Discussion started at noon and continued till midnight with a small break for dinner for half an hour. It was an amazing experience to find how the peasant workers intelligently com-

prehended the problems created by the rapidly changing times. The convention elected Abdus Salam Yatu as the president of the first congress of the Kisan Conference which was to be held at Kabamarg. A sub-committee was formed in the convention to draft a memorandum for submission to the Cabinet Mission. A telegram was sent to the Mission telling them that the peasants in Kashmir forming ninety per cent of the total population refused to be represented by any one other than the accredited leaders of the Kisan Conference. This was considered necessary because the Nationalist leaders had been trying to secure an interview with the Cabinet Mission to represent the case of the State people according to their own ideology. A public meeting was held in Dyalgam at the conclusion of the convention where about a dozen distinguished leaders spoke on the aims and ideals of the peasant movement. Nearly five thousand people attended it.

The brilliant success that attended the convention gave an added impetus to the cause. The returning delegates took sparks of fire with them which had burnt in big flames at Dyalgam for two days and with this they lit the emotions of peasants wherever they went. How could the Nationalists remain unperturbed ? The High Command of the National Conference had reason to feel ruffled. The Muslim Conference was already a source of trouble for them. If the Kisan Conference was allowed to swell it was bound to prove disastrous. Therefore Afzal Beg, who had by this time resigned from the Government but was roaming about in India with Sheikh Abdullah in search of an interview with the Cabinet Mission, returned in haste to his constituency. On hearing the sensational reports of the convention from his colleagues, he impulsively decided to proceed to Dyalgam and hold a public meeting there. This, he was sure, would break the spell of the new movement. Peasants called Dyalgam their stronghold, their citadel. If the fortress was bombarded, the movement was bound to collapse But Afzal Beg was told that no peasant in Dyalgam was prepared to hear him. That did not deter the ex-Minister; he would carry a few hundred men with himself from Anantnag.

RISE OF DEMOCRATIC FORCES

The political adventure or as it might rightly be called an armed attack on the rising revolutionary movement of the working classes was launched on the 9th April in the morning. There were nine lorries and twenty-two *tongas* in the force carrying about four hundred men equipped with *lathis* and other weapons. Besides, a couple of hundred Nationalist volunteers went on foot towards Dyalgam. Afzal Beg did not lead his armies; he remained behind and gave instructions that as soon as the village was occupied and a public meeting arranged he should be informed.

Any one with a bit of sense could foretell that the Nationalists were out to break peace and to shed blood. But the Kashmir Government took no notice and allowed the hooliganism to take its own course. Peasants had received information of Beg's evil intentions and sinister move in advance. Their leaders had instructed them to maintain calm and let the Nationalists hold their meeting peacefully. But when the Nationalist workers and volunteers reached Dyalgam they raised filthy slogans abusing the peasant movement and its leaders. There was a big clash the exaggerated reports about which spread all around. Within the twinkling of an eye, more than ten thousand peasants with their anger roused to highest pitch, were seen noisily marching about in the village. The clashes that followed brought the Nationalists to their senses. Many among them were beaten ; parts of a few *tongas* and lorries were damaged. Some peasants also sustained injuries in the scuffle. But the influx of peasants went on unabated and therefore the Nationalists saw safety in running back to Anantnag. Hearing about the fierce opposition of the peasants Afzal Beg rushed to Dyalgam in a car but not before a posse of policemen had left for the disturbed place. Barely had he reached the village and left the protection of his car, a peasant woman put her own *qasaba* (head gear) on Beg's head which signified, according to Kashmir tradition, the greatest disgrace that could be done to a male. The peasants attacked his car and broke some of its glass screens. To his fright Beg found that he had been deserted by his followers and was surrounded on all sides by the hostile and infuriated

men and women of the surrounding villages. Meanwhile two peasant leaders, Habib Shah and Azad Kamal, had arrived on the scene. The former summoned all the peasants and began to deliver an oration, the latter came to the rescue of Beg who was carried away with the assistance of the magistrate and the posse of police on duty, put in his car and pushed down to Anantnag.

To keep his face and prestige before his admirers Beg addressed a public meeting on the outskirts of Anantnag in the evening where, oddly enough, he attacked local Hindus and abused them for supporting the peasant movement.

In conceiving this ill-fated political adventure Afzal Beg had made a fatal miscalculation on the basis of a similar victorious, though ignominious, experience which he has had several years ago. In 1936 there was a quarrel between the Muslims and Pandits of Mattan, another village five miles to the north of Anantnag. A patch of land was under dispute. As an advocate of the Muslim cause Afzal Beg had tried to brow-beat local Pandit leaders. To his discomfiture they had responded equally harshly. Not to be outdone Beg went to Anantnag and returned in the afternoon with about five thousand Muslims equipped with *lathis*. The Hindus being only a few hundred in number, were mortally afraid when they saw the big army approaching under the command of Afzal Beg. They shut themselves up in their houses and let the Muslims do what they liked. Happily nothing untoward occurred but the commander was satisfied with the results. The helpless minority of the Pandits had been humbled. Beg had mistaken peasants for Pandits in Dyalgam. That was his miscalculation and the cause of his defeat.

The Dyalgam incident made the Nationalists more furious. To tackle the rising peasant movement became a question of life and death for them. They must either crush the movement or get crushed themselves in grappling with it. They saw that it was impossible to capture Dyalgam but there were other important towns in the district which should not be allowed to copy Dyalgam and become supporters of the movement. Afzal Beg turned his attention towards them. But

wherever he went he had to face hostility and opposition. He began to intimidate the leaders of the Kisan movement. Here is an excerpt from the letter of resignation of Pandit Prithvi Nath Bhat, B.A. LL.B., vice-president of the Kisan Conference and a member of the Anantnag Bar, which he sent to the President of Kisan Conference on 11th April. It speaks for itself :

> "In the interests of life and property of my relatives and myself I wish to retire from politics. The incident in Dyalgam on 7th April, 1946, which ended in a clash between the adherents of the National Conference and the supporters of the Kisan Conference has made my bare existence impossible in Anantnag where our political opponents threaten to kill me. Mirza Mohammed Afzal Beg's repeated venomous utterances against me have struck terror in the hearts of my kith and kin and I do not want to be the cause of their destruction.
>
> "It is really a misfortune to be born in Kashmir and more so as a Hindu. The National Conferencites who are quite adept in the art of inciting people to violence in the name of religion can conveniently destroy me. I shall continue to serve the Kisan Conference, which is dearest to me, in other ways".

Undaunted by the hostility and the shameful tactics of the Nationalists the peasant leaders in the meantime made earnest preparations for the holding of the congress at Kabamarg. It was evident that the Nationalists would leave no stone unturned to see that no peasant congress was held at all. The Nationalists had worked themselves mentally to such a pitch where it became impossible for them to imagine that any political organisation other than the National Conference with pretensions to revolutionary ideology could exist in the State or at any rate inside the Valley. Afzal Beg considered the birth of the Kisan Conference as a challenge to him personally because the party was born in his constituency which not only he but all his colleagues took for granted as the stronghold of nationalism where not a dog could bark or a cock could crow without the permission of the Nationalist leaders. In the beginning the Nationalists had simply ignored the rise of the peasants. After some time they attempted to kill the movement by treating it beneath contempt. They also used the weapons of bribery to corrupt the poor peasant workers, and of appeal to the religious sentiments of the Muslim peasants but nothing availed.

When these tactics failed they resorted to open violent methods in which Afzal Beg and his prominent lieutenants participated in person. When the brave peasant leaders successfully resisted this suppression and violence it became the most serious problem for the Nationalists to tackle. Beg's unsuccessful adventure doubly harmed them. It had ended in dismal failure and also brought disgrace and discredit on the head of the organisation. This made Beg quite desperate. Whether after taking advice with his colleagues of the High Command or without their consultation he decided to prepare for the last ditch battle with his redoubtable opponents. By the end of April he held a meeting of his best and trusted well-wishers in the district and prepared a plan first to persuade peasantry not to attend the Kabamarg Congress and next if it was held to attack the *pandal* and make it physically difficult to hold any session. A group of about one hundred picked, daring Nationalist volunteers was organised for the second purpose in view.

Reports of the Nationalist designs reached the headquarters of the Kisan Conference. To meet the emergency if the nefarious plan was actually put into operation, the Kisan leaders decided to form a volunteer corps of their own. Within a couple of days no less than five hundred illiterate but well-built peasants left the fields where they were preparing the soil to sow paddy and joined the corps to defend the peasant movement against the fiercest onslaught of the Nationalists. On 23rd of April a public meeting was held at village Vanihama where the volunteer corps was inaugurated. It was a sight worth seeing. *Khaki* uniforms on their bodies, varnished *dandas* in their hands and marching in rows with their feet in tune one could hardly believe that these men had been working in fields only a few days before. Peasants—men, women and children—from the country-side had collected to witness the inauguration ceremony. What joy it gave them to see this revolution taking place under their own eyes. They could not believe what they saw. Women vied with men in raising full-throated slogans admiring the volunteer corps, the Kisan leaders and the revolutionary movement.

Kabamarg is a tiny village seven miles distant to the south of Anantnag. It is half a mile away on the right side from the Anantnag-Verinag Road. When one leaves this road at Larikpura one has to descend about four hundred yards and then ascend again the same distance. Having reached the top of the mound, one abruptly finds a lovely green pasture land stretching before one on which stand some stately *chinars* and other green trees. The few mud huts forming the village together with the holy *ziarat* of the Muslim Durgah is on the opposite end of the land. The place is fully exposed to the sun but being on some more height than the surrounding areas the fresh and fragrant wind constantly blows throughout night and day making it extremely pleasant to camp here. This spot was destined to become the venue of the historic congress of the Kashmir Kisan Conference where the teeming and toiling people of the State adopted decisions of far-reaching consequences for the first time in the annals of the land.

On 11th May this beautiful pasture land set in enchanting surroundings where hardly a few cowherds used to be seen grazing their cattle, became a city of tents and *shamianas*. Some of the leaders and workers had arrived a couple of days earlier and seen to it that everything was arranged properly and completely. The Congress was to begin its first session in the afternoon, on the 11th May. Early in the morning batches of peasant students went in small processions to the nearby villages to collect funds and address the local people on the aims and objects of the movement. One such procession was accompanied by the peasant band and buglers. They were ambushed by the Nationalist volunteers and beaten; some musical instruments were snatched from them. This was a warning to the peasant leaders which they could not ignore. Further enquiries revealed that a big gang of the Nationalists equipped with diverse weapons had collected at the village Nasu at a distance of half a mile making preparations to attack. The Police was present but took no notice of the Nationalist hooliganism.

Two opinions prevailed at Kabamarg as to how the Nationalist attack was to be faced. The extremists were of

the strong view that the peasant volunteer corps should go ahead and disperse the Nationalists, if need be, by force. But moderate leaders were of the view that such a step would result in bloodshed and prove detrimental to the growth of the movement. By doing so peasants shall be playing in the hands of the Nationalists inasmuch as the congress might end in a scuffle without achieving its purpose. The moderates advised that the congress should go on with its work and the volunteer corps should defend the *pandal* on all sides. The latter view won the majority. Abdul Gani Magray, chief of the Kisan Volunteer Corps, was instructed to place his 500 uniformed men round the entire camp and defend it at all costs.

Perhaps the deployment of this volunteer force might not have deterred the Nationalist hooligans from implementing their evil designs. But when in the afternoon thousands upon thousands of peasants with tiny and big red flags in their hands streamed into the *pandal* which had been tastefully decorated with flowers, green leaves, arches, festoons and buntings, the courage of the Nationalists forsook them. They dared not come near the camp. They did not however disperse either. When the congress began its open session in the evening amidst the singing of peasant songs, sounding of bugles and firing of crackers, the Nationalists came nearer the camp and raised filthy slogans abusing the peasant movement and its leaders. A rumour went round that the attack was imminent. The situation became very tense. At this stage to the horror of the peasant leaders it was revealed that a strong posse of workers, espousing extremist views and equipped with sharp spears and knives, were mixed with the big audience and were ready to measure swords with the Nationalist opponents. What the result would be if the clash actually came about it was not difficult to imagine. Very dexterously and calmly the peasant leaders persuaded the extremists to disarm and desist from taking the dangerous step. When I had a look at the collection of the weapons kept under the dais I was terrified. It was remarkable how the armed peasants behaved in a disciplined manner and implicitly obeyed their leaders. The composure of

the congregation of twenty thousand people was also unequalled in the history of political agitation in Kashmir. Happily soon it came to be known that the Nationalists had abandoned the idea of an attack and were content with raising slogans; that facilitated the task of restoring complete order in the camp.

This eruption in the Valley, this elemental movement of the peasant masses, was not new. Kashmir had seen such an upsurge before in 1931. But there was a big difference between what had happened then and what was happening now. No doubt the basic causes were the same in both cases. But while in 1931 religion had played no small part in rousing the passions and emotions of Kashmir Muslims, in 1946 the peasants were moved to action by the awareness of the causes of exploitation, persecution and tyranny. In 1931 the Hindu Raj was the enemy which was to be overthrown. Today the revolt was against the Nationalist renegades no less than the alien Dogra Rule. Fifteen years ago the Freedom Movement was run on religious lines and was deeply communal. In 1946 religion was being consciously divorced from politics; the Freedom Movement was secularised at any rate so far as the Kisan Congress was concerned.

The three day session of the Kabamarg Congress was a new refreshing experience in Kashmir politics. More than a hundred delegates had come from all parts of the Valley to participate in the deliberations. Barring a few educated ones all of them had never known what a political congress looked like. Yet whether it was in committee rooms or in the open session they behaved and spoke with such decorum and constitutional propriety that no observer could have believed that all of them were taking part in such discussions for the first time, There was enthusiasm, serenity, responsibility and tolerance. Every one tried to understand others point of view. Even the most illiterate was making efforts to comprehend the intricate problems that faced the country and the toiling masses. It looked like the real parliament of the peasants and workers who were guided by the sympathetic and patriotic intellectuals. Except for a diversion when the peasant poets and lyricists held

a symposium the congress functioned in a business-like fashion.

Welcoming the delegates to the congress, Ahad Ullah Mir, President of the Reception Committee, observed :

> "Only a toiler can feel and understand the agony of a fellow toiler, None else can do so. The upper classes are only misleading us by their alluring slogans and schemes. They, in no way, want our freedom".

Narrating the bitter experiences of the toiling masses he stated :

> "The Freedom Movement in our country is now fifteen years old. It has been dinned into our ears since long that the movement aims at complete emancipation of the toiling masses. But the freedom is yet to come and meanwhile during past six years of global war the upper classes, in no uncertain terms, laid before us their interpretation of freedom. During this period commodities essential for the life of the people became scarce in villages, not for all but only for the masses. The upper classes got these commodities in abundance in our name but totally deprived us of the same. Miserable as we began to feel we, however, became conscious of the fact that the upper classes and the toiling masses were two distinct forces. It is wise to believe that the toiling masses can never achieve freedom so long as they do not have their own organisation free from the influence of the upper classes. An awakening has been noticeable among the masses during past nine months and naturally the upper classes feel ill at ease. They have, however, begun to realise that we are undoubtedly tyrannised and oppressed".

Regarding the future of the peasant movement, Ahad Ullah declared :

> "As a matter of fact the upper classes are worried about their personal interests. They believe that if the toiling masses carried on their organisational activities unchecked and unhampered their vested interests will come to an end. It is why they seek a compromise with us so that they could obstruct our march. But we have met here in a conference to warn them that our movement will live till the toiling masses of the State achieve complete freedom".

In his brief presidential address Abdus SalamYatu succinctly stated the aims of the Kisan movement and the problems facing the country and the community. Describing the causes of the birth of the working class movement in the State, Abdus Salam said :

> "The movement of the toiling masses in the world has awakened us also. We have begun to look at the freedom struggle of our country from a different angle. Now political freedom alone is not our cherished goal.

We demand and crave for social, economic and spiritual emancipation as well. The toiling masses of the subcontinent of India not only want to throw away the yoke of foreign imperialism but are also keen to free themselves from the bondage of indigenous feudalism and capitalism. The day of deliverance from alien rule is not far off. Events bear testimony to the fact that the British cannot stay long in India. There is an awakening in the country and the British cannot hold it in subjugation. But let me pose a question. Who will replace the British authority in India ? Will there be a government of the upper classes or one representing the toiling masses? This is the main and the biggest problem facing the country at present".

Regarding the partition of India he observed :

"The upper class Hindus, having thrown into background the question relating to the future Government of India, are engaged in the dispute over *Akhand* Hindustan with a view to preserve their vested interests. Their counterpart among Muslims demand the establishment of Pakistan for identical reasons. But we stand neither for the one nor for the other. We believe that so long as it is not decided who the future rulers are to be we can neither support *Akhand* Hindustan nor side with the demand for Pakistan. Our first task is to do away with the prevailing social and economic inequality and injustice and lay the foundations of a new and just order of society. It is only when this objective is achieved that the people of India can themselves decide whether they want to preserve the unity of the country or divide it. At the present moment the basic problem referred to above does not receive necessary attention. The supporters of *Akhand* Hindustan and Pakistan want to preserve the present social order which is dominated by capitalists and feudalists. That being so the toiling masses can have least interest in this scramble for power".

Speaking about the aims of the movement Yatu stated :

"Following in the footprints of the workers of Europe we have to put an end to the capitalistic and feudalistic social order so that a new society based on social justice and equality is brought into being. We want an end of all kind of exploitation so that the peasants are not tyrannised and the mill-owners get no opportunity to rob the workers of the fruits of their labour. All laws aimed at sucking the blood of the toiling masses need to be repealed and abolished. We want establishment of a society which will guarantee to the workers fullest opportunity for progress".

Enumerating the bitter experiences of the working classes of the State which they had gained during the course of the Freedom Movement Abdus Salam said :

"The Freedom Movement in our State is now fifteen years old. The toiling masses have nourished it by undergoing supreme financial and

physical sacrifices but without any good to them. Only the upper classes have benefited by it. They have not only been able to preserve their vested interests but have also added to these. The reason is that both the toiling masses and the upper classes took part in this struggle and whereas the former fought for freedom, the latter used it to their advantage. Why it happened so is not difficult to understand. We had been entertaining hazy and vague notions about our goal so far. But now the Freedom Movement has reached a new stage. The toiling masses and the upper classes have fallen out. We want to revolutionize the present unjust society so that the toiling masses get their political and economic rights. This we call real freedom".

Explaining the future of Freedom Movement he declared : "Till now the upper classes exploited us because we were not clear about our goal but they find that such exploitation is not possible in future. Freedom for us means establishment of a new social order in our country which knows no exploitation and guarantees egual social, economic and political status for all. Our movement aims at affording all the opportunities and facilities to the toiling masses here in our country which a man in this world is entitled to. The upper classes have raised communal slogans so that the masses are misled in the name of religion. Also with a view to preserve their vested interests the upper classes have founded parties in the name of the nation and the country. The toiling masses have nothing to do either with the communal organisations or the so-called nationalist parties. Our struggle knows no communal barriers or nationalist prejudice. We are hostile to all distinctions based on colour, creed or race. We believe in a society which is free from the evils of landlordism, capitalism and feudalism and which is opposed to exploitation of man by man".

Abdus Salam concluded by saying : "Our movement is world-wide. Hundreds of millions of the toiling masses throughout the world are associated with it. It is bound to succeed sooner or later. If we organize ourselves and march unitedly towards our goal we can establish the society of our conception sooner than is expected".

The Kisan Congress adopted seventy-five resolutions in all, four of which were introduced at the instance of the Working Committee and the rest by the delegates. The resolutions dealt with all conceivable matters from the abolition of the unrepresentative Government to the repairs of roads and canals. According to one of the resolutions the Congress expressed its determination to end exploitation of man by man in every form

and shape after overthrow of the feudal and capitalist regime in the State. Another resolution sounded the death-knell of *jagirdari* and absentee landlordism. Yet another expressed the solidarity of the State working classes with the workers of the world. One resolution forbade the tillers of the soil to take the place of any tenant who is ejected by a *chakdar* for no valid reason.

A sub-committee of the Subjects Committee prepared a draft of the constitution for the party. It was adopted by the congress after necessary changes. As the organisation was to represent and speak for the entire working class in the State and as already hundreds of non-peasant workers and intellectuals had been enlisted as members, the name had to be altered to convey the nature of composition of the organisation and its aims. It was no longer to be only an organisation of the peasants. It was therefore called All Jammu and Kashmir Kisan Mazdoor Conference. Prem Nath Bazaz was asked to prepare a comprehensive manifesto explaining the aims and objects of the Conference in accordance with the constitution and the resolutions adopted in the Congress.[1]

We need not discuss in detail other articles of the constitution of the party. But this notable fact needs record that unlike the constitutions of all the older political parties including the National Conference, the constitution of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference did not display any sentiments of loyalty by stating that the representative government in the State was to be established under the aegis of the Maharaja. Indeed there was no mention of the Maharaja in the constitution. The people's democracy was to be of a sovereign republican form.

With the adoption of every important resolution there was firing of crackers in the camp ; the audience raised shouts of joy and threw turbans and caps high in the air. There was great rejoicing and merry-making as if the adoption of a resolution meant its implementation.

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[1] A draft of this manifesto was prepared by Bazaz soon after his release from detention in 1950. It has been published in anticipation of the sanction of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference in a book form entitled *Azad Kashmir*.

On the last day of the historic congress a report came in that the Nationalists were exasperated and had become desperate. They were sure to make an assault at midnight. Despite the beseechings of the leaders, no less than two thousand peasants refused to leave the camp till early next morning when the last threat of the assault had disappeared.

In the morning on the 14th May the camp was dismantled and a long procession of leaders, delegates and workers started from Kabamarg and went to Dyalgam. Throughout the way on both sides of the road, peasants—men, women and children—came out and showered flowers, dry fruits and *shirini* on the procession. For the time being unity of the peasants and the intellectuals had triumphed ; the hooliganism of the Nationalists had met with failure ; the hope of the advent of a new era in the political, economic and social life of Kashmir had risen in the hearts of the tyrannised and persecuted millions in the Valley.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

ON EVE OF PARTITION

IN the summer of 1945 the Nationalists began to realise that their opponents were becoming numerous and that they were alienated from the masses. In a public meeting in Pratap Park which was being addressed by Abdullah, there were not more than 123 people. The Nationalists were of the opinion that if they could secure more political power they would get the opportunity not only of doing constructive work but also of suppressing the elements in body politic hostile to them. During Sir B. Narsingh Rao's time, they made many attempts to persuade the Maharaja to hand over to their representative in the Cabinet such portfolios as Education, Panchayats, Revenue and Co-operative so that the prestige of the Party might be enhanced. But the Maharaja was not willing to do so. Firstly because it was not in the nature of Hari Singh to trust his "dear subjects" particularly the Muslims, he was loath to part with power and hand it over to representatives of the people with any semblance of popularity. Secondly (in fairness to him let it be said) he had misgivings as to how the Nationalists would use the power. The Valley was resounding with the cries of strident protests against the *goonda-ism* and gangsterism of the Nationalists. Was it right and politic that they should be given additional authority ? Would it not prove harmful for the people and unsafe for his throne ? Such questions were being repeatedly and daily asked in the local Press and must have been revolving in the mind of the ruler.

The appointment of Ram Chandra Kak as Prime Minister was hailed by the Nationalists and their Press. Having assured the Maharaja that they would welcome the appointment of Kak, the Nationalists expected privileges in return from the new Premier. This hope proved unfounded. Kak was egoistic

ambitious, conceited and reactionary of the worst type. He had much in common with Haksar. Kak entertained a very poor opinion of the Kashmir masses and their leaders, no matter what ideology they professed. By living in the seclusion of the palace for many years and having had no touch with the people, he had formed a perverted view that his predecessors had vitiated the political atmosphere in the country by conceding constitutional and other reforms at the demand of the unworthy leaders. These reforms appeared to him to be much more than the country deserved. He was stiff-necked and considered it beneath his dignity to talk with political leaders on equal terms. He wanted political parties to be submissive and their leaders to be loyal first to the Maharaja and next to himself. Those parties which did not conform to this pattern he wanted to destroy. It was his great ambition to establish a loyalist set-up in the State and to the completion of this mission he fixed his mind and devoted his energies.

In order that he may get time to consolidate his position and with the ultimate purpose of dealing his contemplated blow Kak remained generous and partial to the National Conference in the beginning. Where others were denied civil liberties, the Nationalists were allowed freedom to function as they liked. The partisan spirit which animated the policy of the Government for many years became highly pronounced in his time. The thin veil which the previous Prime Ministers used to wear to hide their partiality for the Congress as well as the National Conference and hostility towards the Muslim League was thrown away. The new regime openly encouraged Gandhian Nationalism and ruthlessly put down the supporters of the two-nation theory of Jinnah as well as the upholders of democracy and freedom of the masses. Kak had been the Prime Minister for barely a month when J. L. Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad and Abdul Gaffar Khan came to participate in the annual session of the National Conference, at the invitation of the Nationalists. In July Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, had, under instructions of the British Government, convened, in Simla, a conference of leaders of the big political parties to

settle their differences about the future of India. But it ended in failure because the Congress leaders, as usual, refused to accept the Muslim League as the representative party of the Indian Muslims. Communal passions were running high and it was feared by Kashmir Muslims that the Congress leaders were visiting the State to exploit the National Conference for harming the cause of the Indian Muslims. It was in such a surcharged atmosphere that the Nationalists declared to carry out a procession of the Congress leaders to welcome them on 1st August. Immediately on the other side the leaders of the Muslim Conference decided to hold a peaceful hostile demonstration to show that the State Muslims did not adhere to Congress ideology and were in fact opposed to it. This produced a great tension in the city which was heightened by Abdullah's provocative speeches delivered during the closing days of July in preparation for the procession. "Those who take part in hostile demonstrations will be disgraced and routed," warned Abdullah in a meeting on 30th July at Kharadoori. Both parties alerted their volunteers and instructed them to be ready for any eventuality. It was clear that the city was being psychologically as well as physically made ready for a clash, yet the Government did not take any precautions to avoid it nor did it place any ban on the holding of public gatherings or processions just as it used to do on mere pretexts when the opponents of the National Conference were the sponsors of such functions and demonstrations. The notorious case of Nawab Bahadur Yar Jung and how shabbily he was treated was still fresh in the memory of the people.

On 1st August in the afternoon a river procession of the Congress leaders started from Chhatabal, northern extremity of the city. Hardly had it proceeded a few yards when thousands of people on both banks of Vitasta greeted the guests by waving black flags and raising slogans condemnatory of the Congress and the Nationalists. At the same time there started clashes between the followers of the National Conference and the Muslim Conference all over the city. The hostile demonstrators did not remain peaceful.

They hurled shoes, stones and dirty rags on the procession from the river banks and the bridges when the boats passed under them. The Congress leaders escaped any injury miraculously. Nationalist volunteers armed with *lathis* were roaming about the streets and beating innocent people and damaging property but the police looked on as unconcerned spectators. One man Salam Darzi was fatally wounded. Both the parties claimed that the deceased was an adherent of their organisation. The Nationalists however proved more clever in carrying the dying man to Mujahid Manzil where he breathed his last. Among the dozens of the wounded were Mohammed Usuf Qureshi, general secretary of the Muslim Conference, who was dragged out of a *tonga* and mercilessly beaten outside the Maharaj Ganj Police Station under the very nose of the guardians of Law and Order.

In the evening an address of welcome was presented to the Congress leaders in the Hazuri Bagh when posters denouncing Congress ideology and expressing lack of confidence in the National Conference were distributed in large numbers.

On the next day, 2nd August, Abdullah, in his funeral oration while burying the dead body of Salam Darzi in the graveyard of Ziarat Naqashband Sahib, advocated violence as the only means of ending the opponents of the National Conference among whom he included the leaders of the Muslim Conference and the Yuvak Sabha and the editors of the two dailies *The Hamdard* and *The Martand*. "You must be prepared as parts of a powerful and strong organisation to act on the orders of your commander when he beckons you to begin massacre or withdraw", Abdullah told his audience according to the report of his speech as published by *The Khidmat*, official organ of the National Conference, on 4th August, 1945.

True to his declaration Abdullah went to the State Hospital and threatened Usuf Qureshi who was lying there in a precarious condition, that if he did not desist from opposing National Conference he would be crushed. Oddly enough and yet not so oddly enough the Government arrested several Muslim Conference leaders including Usuf Qureshi and Abdul Salam Dalal in connection with the disturbances on 1st August.

Not even a volunteer of the National Conference was touched or taken into custody though in an official communique the Government held both parties responsible for the clash.

Yet this was not all. Sometime before this incident Abdullah had gone to Shopian, a town in South Kashmir, where the Muslims made a hostile demonstration against him under the guidance of the local *Mir Waiz*, Mohammed Abdullah. Thereafter the Nationalists and the followers of the *Mir Waiz* were at logger heads. News reached Shopian early in August that Abdullah was planning to regain his previous position in the town under protection of Nehru with whom he intended to visit the town. The *Mir Waiz* immediately set himself to the task of making the visit a failure. Hundreds of black flags were got ready. The District Magistrate thereupon banned all processions and gatherings in the town under the provisions of Defence of Kashmir Rules and the *Mir Waiz* abandoned the idea of holding any demonstration. On 12th August however Nehru accompanied by the Nationalist leaders visited Shopian on his way to Kaunsar Nag. The Congress leader was carried in a procession in the town and Abdullah addressed a meeting of hundreds of people who had gathered to receive the visitor. No action was taken by the authorities at this deliberate defiance of law. There were loud protests against the partisan policy of the Government and *The Hamdard* in an outspoken, spirited and lengthy article captioned "Whither Ram Chandra Kak?" in its issue of 25th August exposed and denounced the unholy alliance of the despotic Prime Minister with the national fascists of Kashmir. Three days later on 28th August the Government imposed a ban on the Daily ordering the publisher to get every word censored by the District Magistrate before it was printed in the columns of the journal.

The annual session of the National Conference was held at Sopore on 3,4, and 5th August Because of the presence of such eminent leaders as Nehru and Abdul Gaffar Khan it proved to be a grand show, no less than twenty thousand people attending it. Majority of the audience however comprised of Hindus. The session reiterated the same demands as the Party had

been putting forth year after year about complete responsible government and the right of the people to self-determination. The National Conference adopted the New Kashmir Manifesto a second time.

Both the Congress leaders spoke at length in the session impressing upon the audience and through them on the State people that the ideology of the Nationalists was the right one and that this Party alone was the real representative of the masses of the country. "Sheikh Abdullah is the gift of God. If you don't follow him you will be humiliated," declared Abdul Gaffar Khan. Very ably did Nehru appeal to the State Muslims in his speeches to understand the dangers involved in communal, sectarian and narrow-minded politics. His arguments were persuasive and he spoke with transparent sincerity. Many complaints had been made to him by the State Hindus against the Nationalist leaders justifying their aloofness from the National Conference. "If non-Muslims want to live in Kashmir they should join the National Conference or bid good-bye to the country," beckoned Nehru in the open session. In his reply to an address of welcome which was presented to him on behalf of the Kashmiri Pandit community in Shital Nath Grounds on 7th August, Nehru stressed that "the National Conference is the real national organisation and even if one Hindu does not become its member, it will still continue to be so. If Pandits do not join it, no safeguards and weightages will protect them". There was nothing peculiar, extra-ordinary or objectionable in all this and the Congress leaders had every right to preach their views and propagate for their nationalist ideology. Yet it was certainly strange that Abdullah and his colleagues, who had vigorously condemned the interference of outsider Jinnah in the affairs of the State, should have invited and welcomed the Congress leaders and arranged the meetings to enable them to influence the views of the State people. To power-hunters foreign ideologies and politicians are welcome if through them their own position is strengthened. But if the outsiders are critical and refuse to support the careerists, they at once become the enemies of the motherland.

So far so good. The Nationalists were happy to see Kak doing as they wished. But their jubilation proved short-lived. It did not take long for Kak's ulterior motives to come on the surface. So far as power was concerned, Kak not only refused to make any additions to what Nationalists had, he also attempted to curtail it. That created a rift and within a few months the chasm had yawned a good deal. The end of the year saw Kak and the Nationalists at logger heads with each other.

Not only on this account was Beg restless. As one of its members whatever personal views he might express in the meetings of the State Cabinet when the decisions were made public he was held equally responsible for them along with his colleagues. In a Cabinet of five ministers Beg was in the minority of one because Ganga Ram, the other "popular" Minister, despite the fact that Nationalists had owned him as symbol of revolution, usually voted with the unpopular three. The Cabinet as a whole was what it always used to be, the protector of the feudal order and the defender of the Dogra Raj. Beg, whether he liked it or not, had to be a tool or at best a part of this reactionary Government. Indeed it was to function as such that he was paid his big salary and the National Conference was honoured by his appointment. Instead of raising the prestige of his Party, Beg's participation in the Government had lowered it in the eyes of the public. Even the rank and file among the Nationalists were disgusted, The Nationalist members of the Assembly either by design or unwittingly made the position worse. On 27th March 1945 a sensational and significant development took place in the session of the Legislative Assembly in Jammu. A resolution was introduced by Ajodhya Nath, member from Mirpur, condemning the Government for wasting money on the construction of Mirpur-Serai Alamgir Road which, because of wrong alignment, was of little use to the public. The mover demanded that the road should be reconstructed through another direction. Ajodhya Nath advanced forceful arguments to prove his contention and stated that the Minister concerned and his subordinates were careless, inefficient and totally unsuited to their jobs. Strangely enough, the majority of the

members in the House including the Nationalist Party supported the resolution. It was a clear vote of no-confidence against Beg who was in charge of the Public Works Department. "The adoption of the resolution by the Assembly amounts to, according to constitutional practice, defeat of the Government and victory of the members of the House", confessed *The Khidmat*, official organ of the National Conference, on 2nd April in its leading article, "and because the resolution concerns the department held by Hon'ble Afzal Beg it should be considered his defeat in particular". But Beg was not induced to resign as he should have done. Instead, the High Command of the National Conference forced its Parliamentary Party to issue a statement saying that they voted for the resolution under certain misunderstandings. But the incident of the 27th March was only a symptom which indicated that Beg's position was untenable.

Having become uncomfortable in his ministerial chair, opportunist Beg after consultation with the High Command of the National Conference thought of relinquishing the Government and appearing as martyr in the public. He wrote a letter to Premier Kak placing his "grievances" before him. In the correspondence that ensued the latter turned out to be more astute by showing that there was no substance in Beg's complaints. When the correspondence was published impartial critics were surprised to find that what Beg wanted was no more than a separate Secretariat for himself and the right to express personal opinions on Cabinet decisions in the Legislative Assembly which later Kak rightly held could not be allowed under any government.

While such interesting events were taking place in Kashmir in British India things were changing with great speed. Having failed in the Simla Conference to bring the leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League to an agreement about the future of India, the British Government declared to hold general elections in the winter of 1946 to ascertain the opinions of the different communities in the country. The results of the elections proved that the Congress was the most popular

party among the Hindus of India but the Muslims did not have much faith in it. The Muslim voters overwhelmingly supported the two-nation theory and mostly returned the nominees of the League to all except one provincial legislatures as well as the Legislative Assembly in the centre. Only in the Muslim province of North Western Frontier did the Congress win a majority of seats enabling it to form the Government.

The general elections left no doubt in the minds of observers that Quaide Azam Jinnah was truly representing the voice of Muslim India so far as the limited electorate could be said to represent the community. In any case the results disheartened the Congress Muslims. Naturally the British Government became strengthened in their basic policy that the Indian problem could not be solved without an agreement between the leaders of the principal communities who had been accredited by the general elections. With the approval of the Parliament a mission consisting of three Cabinet Ministers, Sir Pethic Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. Alexander, was sent to India to find out a solution of the problem in co-operation with the leaders of all shades of opinion. It was clear that the British Cabinet Mission could not devise any scheme much different from the Cripps Plan which contained the germs of the partition of India in it. After the resounding victory achieved by the Muslim League at the polls it was not possible for any responsible members of the British Government to ignore the demand of Pakistan. This much was obvious to even the meanest understanding.

As stated in an earlier part of this book, the Nationalists, hardly imagining what developments were in store in Indian politics, had broken with Jinnah in 1944. They had displeased and dishonoured him. It was widely known that the Quaide Azam was not the man to easily forgive or forget where political humiliation was concerned. With their opponents gaining strength in Kashmir and League becoming supreme in Muslim politics the Nationalists were deeply perturbed. The best and the wisest course for them would have been to bow before democracy and remain aloof from both the Congress and

League politics but when once a man or a party has far advanced on a wrong path, the sense of false prestige rarely allows it to return to the right track. The more difficulty it meets with in its way the more tenaciously it holds the cause from which the trouble originates.

The pronouncements of the British leaders and the activities of the Cabinet Mission left little doubt in the mind of far-seeing men that India was to be divided. Where will Kashmir go? In their own interests the Nationalists wanted the State to join the Congress bloc but State Muslims were fiercely opposed to it. The Nationalists had proposals to make their plan successful. They wanted more power to suppress their opponents, both the standard-bearers of Democracy as well as the supporters of the Muslim League. They argued that Prime Minister Kak would not be able to implement such a plan for two reasons. Firstly being a Hindu Kak could neither successfully suppress revolutionaries almost all of whom were Muslims nor the supporters of Jinnah; it would create tremendous reaction inside and an adverse effect on the public opinion outside the State. Secondly the Prime Minister could not claim popularity as the Nationalists could who had worked for many years as the leaders of the people who now formed the opposition.

These arguments appeared so simple and straightforward to the Nationalists that they could not believe any Hindu, however conceited or egoistic, could overlook them. But Kak cherished more sinister aims. He planned to destroy not only the democrats and the Muslim communalists but also the Nationalists in one sweep. He was therefore deaf to all that the Nationalists so earnestly stated. No coaxing softened Kak and no threats frightened him. He remained adamant to the last. Reduced to utter helplessness Afzal Beg resigned on the 18th March 1946, the opening day of the budget session of the State Legislature.

Having failed with the ruling Hindu class, the Nationalists characteristically and rather brazenly turned to the leadership of the Muslim Conference with a proposal to form a united front of the State Muslims against the autocratic Hindu rule

Beg and Sadiq met Sagar and Hamidullah in Jammu by the end of March to clear misunderstandings and iron out the differences. Some leading Muslim officials also participated in the discussions. While these pourparlers were in progress a Hindu-Muslim clash took place in the city which added some zest and a little seriousness to the negotiations. Understandably the Muslim Conference leaders demanded the dissolution of the National Conference as a pre-requisite for the establishment of the united front of the Muslims in the State. In other words the Nationalists were asked to commit suicide which they were unwilling to do. No agreement was therefore arrived at with the result that the dejection of the Nationalists became deeper.

Meanwhile Premier Kak contrived a disaster for the Nationalists. He successfully persuaded Mian Ahmad Yar, the leader of the Nationalist Party in the Assembly, to accept the ministership vacated by his erstwhile deputy Beg. It will be recalled that while nominating Beg for the post of a Minister in 1944 the High Command of the National Conference had overlooked the prior claims of Ahmad Yar. He had been nursing that grudge and now took his revenge. When the appointment of Mian Ahmad Yar was officially announced on the 15th April it came as a bolt from the blue to the Nationalists. They had been routed by the crafty Pandit Premier. The Nationalists dubbed Ahmad Yar a traitor. But it was the proverbial pot calling the kettle black; which one among the leaders of the National Conference was not in one way or another playing the role of a traitor?

In the enveloping gloom Abdullah thought of approaching the Maharaja as a last resort. Perhaps the Hindu ruler might prove sympathetic and helpful where his haughty Premier had remained recalcitrant, believed the Nationalist leader. Unannounced Abdullah went straight to Bombay where, as usual, the Maharaja was taking deep interest in the fate of his race-horses while the fate of his throne, his country and millions of people was hanging in the balance. It did not take Abdullah many days to know that at the time Kak and Hari Singh were one in destroying the freedom of Kashmiris. They were not

prepared to share this honour with traitors or renegades who still publicly claimed any popularity. The Maharaja refused to grant an interview to Abdullah. The Nationalist leader was now exasperated beyond measure ; the cup of his desperation was full. Suffering from acute mental agony he returned to Kashmir in the middle of May to be told by Beg of the tremendous success which the Kisan leaders had achieved at Kabamarg by holding the momentous and historic Congress of the rising democratic elements in the country and his own dismal failure to frustrate it. This added fuel to the fire of impotent rage that was burning in the heart of Abdullah. Without consulting the Working Committee and without calmly pondering over the causes of his defeat and demoralisation he started a campaign of villification of the royal family in the city. "Sheikh Abdullah and many of his followers have been arrested following a series of speeches delivered by him and members of his party during the last two weeks", stated the Press communique of the Kashmir Government. "In these speeches, people were incited to destroy the existing Government, to repudiate allegiance to His Highness and force him to quit Kashmir. Unmentionable abuse was heaped upon the person of His Highness and the ruling family". Thus was started the agitation known as the "Quit Kashmir" Movement in the history of the State.

The speeches delivered by Nationalist leaders on a number of days beginning with 15th May were primarily directed against the Dogra Rule but it is not surprising that in excitement, rage and bitterness they made irresponsible and indecent utterances wounding the sentiments and susceptibilities of certain sections of the people. The Dogras and other non-Kashmiri Hindus were alienated immediately to a man. Even the Dogra adherents of the National Conference dissociated themselves from the movement. The tiny minority of the Kashmiri Pandits took fright at this sudden turn in the policy of the National Conference. Kashyap Bandhu, a Pandit member of the Working Committee of the Conference, in a statement in his *Weekly Desh* mournfully complained that the Committee were not consulted by the top-most leader before launching the move-

ment. There was excitement in parts of the city and a small clash took place between Hindus and Muslims in Amira Kadal area on the 18th of May.

On 19th May Abdullah suspended his further programme of holding public meetings and on 21st he left in a car for the plains. It was insinuated that he wanted to run away after having disturbed the peace but he has stated that he was going to meet Nehru for consultation on the latest developments in the State politics. Probably he was right because his fresh activities must have put his Congress patrons in an awkward position and they must have summoned him to hear what he was about. He was, however, not allowed to leave the boundaries of the State. A Superintendent of Police equipped with a warrant under the provisions of the Defence Rules arrested him in the afternoon at a place between Uri and Garhi and brought him back to Srinagar where he was lodged in the Badami Bagh Military Cantonment as a special class prisoner.

Next day on 2nd May the Dogra military was posted in every nook and corner of the city and all important and unimportant leaders and workers of the National Conference numbering nearly three hundred both Muslim and non-Muslim were taken into custody in an ordered and pre-planned manner and kept in detention in the Central Jail. Subsequently Premier Kak revealed in a Press interview that he had been making preparations for this day for eleven past months and he had recalled some State troops from Middle East War Front for the purpose.

The Nationalists brought out small processions in the city which came into clash with the military and police who made lathi charges on the crowds. At one place the military had to open fire when two people died and ten were injured.

The Dogra Military misbehaved themselves. They perpetrated excesses on both Hindus and Muslims, on Nationalists and non-Nationalists. All people passing through any street or crossing a bridge where troops were stationed had to raise their hands high and shout the slogan "*Maharaja Bahadur ki Jai*". Several shops were looted on mere pretence that the owners did not sell goods to militarymen even when the soldiers offer-

ed the full prices. Many innocent persons were beaten and molested on suspicion of being agitators. When, however, these things were brought to the notice of Kak he issued instructions to the Military Command that such objectionable practices should stop at once. Thereafter matters did improve a good deal but militarymen here and there continued to be the source of trouble till they remained posted anywhere. The slogan Quit Kashmir was enough to ruffle the martial spirit of the Dogra soldier.

The Nationalists were not unprepared to face the blow that had been dealt at them by Kak. Only the country did .not support them this time as it had done in 1931-34 or in 1938. As already explained, for different reasons both the Muslims and the progressive elements in all the communities had by now turned to be the fierce adversaries of the Nationalists. The leaders of the National Conference were conscious of it. One might say that it was because of this opposition that they had stumbled upon the Quit Kashmir adventure. In his speeches delivered to crowds Abdullah stressed two points. First that the Treaty of Amritsar between the British and Raja Gulab Singh was a saledeed unacceptable to the people of Kashmir and should be abrogated. Second that Maharaja Hari Singh should quit the Valley bag and baggage and leave Kashmiris alone to decide their future by themselves.

These were attractive but fraudulent slogans. Abdullah wanted to kill two birds with one stone. He knew that the demand for the deposition of the Hindu Maharaja which the Quit Kashmir slogan contained, would be very welcome to the Muslims of the Valley among whom the Nationalists had lost enormously. At the same time it would blow wind out of the sails of the Socialists and other democratic forces who had lately united under the Kisan Mazdoor Conference and raised their head in the State. The Nationalist leaders and workers presented the same slogan in two different colours before the Muslims and the progressives. To the former they would say that the National Conference is out to end the Hindu Rule (with emphasis on the adjective), the highest goal that any Muslim move-

ment can place before itself, and before the latter they would stress that the Conference has finally determined to exterminate despotism and autocracy, root and branch.

But the Kashmir people did not forget the *goondaism* and the gangsterism of the Nationalists. So the patriotic appeals and democratic shibboleths or religious slogans of the Nationalist agitators did not prove of much avail. Soon after the agitation started, Abdus Salam Yatu, president of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference, issued a statement advising the working classes to desist from taking any part in the movement. A few days later on 30th May Ghulam Abbas, president of the Muslim Conference, in a statement at Lahore declared that "the agitation had been started at the behests of the Congress leaders" and that "the object was to restore the lost prestige of the Nationalists". When the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference met subsequently at Srinagar on 8th June it adopted a resolution on similar lines. The committee warned the Muslims not to take any part in the movement as that would jeopardise the interests of the Muslim community. These onslaughts proved quite destructive. In imitation of the Congress Quit India movement, the Nationalists attempted sabotage in the city and actually destroyed a few yards of roads, cut telegraph and telephone wires and dismantled the poles. They also attempted to burn bridges and public buildings. But this did not continue for many days. The presence of military and armed police no less than the hostility of the people put a stop to the agitation in its virulent form.

But the fatal blow was yet to come. It was unexpected and though dealt adroitly, sympathetically and cleverly, it stunned the Nationalist leaders and demoralised the rank and file of the National Conference. In 1946 the Congress advocated the establishment of responsible governments in the States but no eminent Congress leader demanded the abolition of the Princely order. The goal of All India States People's Conference of which Abdullah had been made a top-ranking leader was the achievement of popular governments in the States under the aegis of the rulers of the States. It was evidently for this

reason that the Nationalist leaders had adopted the political amalgam in the shape of the notorious manifesto of "New Kashmir" envisaging a communist form of government with the reactionary Maharaja as the constitutional head. When Abdullah in a fit of despondency and rage decided to raise the slogan of deposing the Maharaja, the Congress leaders were amazed and annoyed. Not only was such an action by their protege bound to scare away the Princely order at a very critical juncture in the history of the independence struggle of India but it would also adversely effect the Hindu public opinion because the Maharaja, singled out of all the rulers for deposition, was a Hindu. Therefore the Congress leaders lost no time to condemn the Quit Kashmir adventure and brought the fullest pressure upon the Nationalists to disown it.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed who had slipped out of the State before the Quit Kashmir movement was launched issued a statement under instructions of the Congress leaders in Delhi in the beginning of June stating that "the National Conference demanded the establishment of responsible government in the State" and "did not desire to harm the royal family in anyway". He even got a new draft, palatable to the Congress leaders and the Hindu public, of a speech, purported to have been delivered by Abdullah before his arrest, prepared and published in the hospitable columns of the Congress Press in which the compromising interpretation of the agitation was presented to the world.

Prosecutions were launched against Abdullah and some other leaders who had delivered speeches objectionable in the eyes of law. All facilities were afforded to them to present their defences. Asaf Ali, a famous Congress leader and a barrister of outstanding abilities, came from Delhi to defend Abdullah who was charged with sedition on three counts for three speeches. He was assisted by several local lawyers. During the course of his imprisonment in a well furnished bungalow at Badami Bagh, Abdullah had recovered balance so far as he was capable to do and therefore it was easy for Congress leaders to persuade him to understand diplomacy and politics

in general. The lengthy statement that was prepared for Abdullah to read before the court was couched in bombastic terms. Most of it was devoted to the discussion of generalities and principles of democracy and good government. He admitted before the court that in his speeches he had stated that Maharaja Hari Singh should quit Kashmir. But at the same time he denied that he had suggested the deposition of the Dogra Ruler or had cast any aspersions on the royal family. What he wanted was the end of irresponsible rule and the establishment of a responsible form of government in the State. The defence was not only inconsistent in itself but was blatantly contradictory to all that he had done and could not save him from the clutches of law. The judge trying him was constrained to remark in his verdict:

> "The accuused said in defence that the purpose of his speeches was to demand the establishment of responsible government under the aegis of the Maharaja but the facts on record do not support this. Good sense returned to the accused on sound advice but then it was too late and the mischief had beed done" [1]

By the time this judgment was delivered and Abdullah sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment on each count (the sentence to run concurrently) the fraud of the Quit Kashmir movement had been exposed and the bluff called.

But though amazed and annoyed the Congress leaders were least inclined to lose the services of the Nationalists when the fate and future of India was in the melting pot. Of all the Congressmen Nehru was deeply worried and agitated over the unfortunate developments. He wanted to rectify the mistakes committed by the Nationalists and at the same time to bring them out of the quandary unscathed if he could. Without caring to know the facts about the movement and the situation in the Valley he issued statements indicting, condemning and castigating the Kashmir Government on the basis of whatever information was supplied to him by Bakshi and his colleagues who had been able to run away before the start of the agitation. In a statement on the 27th May 1946 issued from

[1] This is a translation from Urdu while the original judgment is in English.

Delhi only six days after the arrest of Abdullah, Nehru made the sensational but unfounded charges against the Kashmir Government that its military had demolished the wall of Jama Masjid and that the dead bodies of those killed by the firing were soaked in petrol and burnt. Nehru said : "Srinagar has become the city of dead". Had the Quit Kashmir movement been as popular as the movement of 1931 such highly irresponsible statements would have inflamed the passions of the fanatic Muslims and proved very dangerous for the safety of the State and the life and property of the Hindus. But that was no concern of Nehru. His sole aim was to help his friends. In season and out of season Nehru deprecates the excitation of communal or religious passions even when there are grounds for doing so. But in Kashmir he could not suppress his baser impulse to hit the opponent. When great minds are occupied by low desires in a quarrel with an adversary the fall is pitiable indeed.

The statement of Nehru was contradicted by Chaudhri Hamid Ullah, vice-president of the Muslim Conference, two days later who said that "there was no truth in the report that the wall of Jama Masjid had been demolished". Of course every one in Srinagar knew it. But the contradiction by an eminent leader of the Muslim Conference put Nehru to shame. Hindus inside and outside the State were furious at what he had said. He was forced to apologise. He said :

> "Two incidents I mentioned I should like to correct. I have no present information which can substantiate them and I regret that I gave publicity to these two incidents without sufficient proof. These two allegations are the burning of bodies of persons killed and the breaking down of a compound wall of the Jama Masjid. Very probably the deaths due to firing were much greater than those admitted in the official communique. How all these bodies were disposed of I cannot say without much greater proof than I possess. As regards the allegation about the wall of Jama Masjid, it appears that there is a wooden gate and a military lorry passing through accidentally disloged some bricks of a column. This may have given rise to the story. Anyhow I am sorry that I stated something which was not correct".

This did not, however, deter Nehru from resorting to other means to enhance the prestige of the Nationalists and

sustain the movement for some time. On 18th June, despite the advice of many friends and colleagues, he decided to visit the Valley. Having known his hostile views and afraid that his presence will revive the violent agitation which was heaving its last breath, the Kashmir Government decided not to allow him entry into the State. Nehru left Delhi according to schedule. From Rawalpindi and Murree a contingent of Congress volunteers numbering nearly three hundred accompanied him with the purpose of forcing the State authorities at Kohala, the border town, to lay down arms and allow him to proceed to the Valley. It looked like an incursion of foreign marauders in medieval times.

The Government had stationed a military picket at Kohala. The reports of Nehru's intended visit had provoked the ire of State Hindus. A fairly large group of Dogra Hindus had travelled all the way from Jammu to Kohala to make a hostile demonstration against him. Rai Bahadur Maharaj Kishen Dhar, District Magistrate of the Kashmir Province, was also present at the spot. The invader arrived with his army at the appointed time. The Congressmen shouted slogans supporting Nehru and his incursion and on the other side the Dogra demonstrators waved black flags. The soldiers and the policemen looked towards the District Magistrate. An order was served upon Nehru instructing him not to enter the boundaries of the State as that would disturb peace. He refused to take any notice of it. Meanwhile Nehru's men had begun to quarrel with the Dogra demonstrators. Wisely did the District Magistrate allow Nehru to proceed further as he liked. The Congressmen thought they had won and all was over. They returned to their homes in Murree and Rawalpindi.

Nehru reached Domel within an hour and stopped there in the Dak Bungalow. The District Magistrate followed him thither. And now the State functionary told the haughty Congress leader that he was under arrest for defying the lawful orders of the District Magistrate. Fretting and fuming Nehru realised he was helpless now and meekly obeyed.

The publication of the news about Nehru's arrest set a

wave of resentment throughout Congress India. Demonstrations were held at many places protesting against the action of the Kashmir Government. In Madura (Madras) the procession was fired upon when one man was killed and several injured. Significantly enough no signs of resentment or anger were visible in Kashmir. The shopkeepers in Srinagar did not even observe the customary *hartal* though the Nationalists did their best to persuade them to do so. Nor were all members of the Congress High Command happy over the episode. Indeed some of them were definitely annoyed by the puerile pranks of their colleague.

Nehru was taken from Domel and lodged in Uri Dak Bungalow. He was told that he could leave Kashmir at any time he liked and for doing so a State car was kept at his disposal but the Government was not prepared to allow him to proceed to Srinagar. For two days Nehru remained in the Dak Bungalow bent upon visiting his Nationalist friends in the city. Ultimately Abul Kalam Azad, Congress President, contacted him on the phone and assured him that the Congress Working Committee had decided to take the matter in their own hands and desired him to return to Delhi. On this assurance Nehru consented to eat the humble pie. He returned to Rawalpindi on the 22nd June. This was a grand success of all the opponents of the National Conference as well as of the Kashmir Government.

The Kashmir Government was convinced by middle of July that the situation had returned to normal and there was no fear of its being revived. Therefore the ban on the entry of Nehru into the State was withdrawn. He visited the Valley on July 24 and interviewed Abdullah in the Badami Bagh Cantonment. On his return he admitted in a Press statement that the leaders of the National Conference had committed mistakes by starting the Quit Kashmir movement but it was not fair to leave them to their fate.

Elated by his success in having foiled Nehru's invasion on 20th June, Ram Chandra Kak began to devise schemes to crush the Freedom Movement by strengthening the Dogra Monarchy

in the traditional despotic manner. It was amazing how this man refused to see the revolutionary changes that were taking place under his very nose. Any head of Kashmir Government would surely have met with failure by acting as foolishly as he did even a dozen years earlier. Indeed Ayyengar and Rao had proved unsuccessful with more enlightened politics than the one he was pursuing. Any one with elementary knowledge of statesmanship and rudiments of politics could say that Kak was heading for disaster. The Prime Minister had already committed the blunder in having launched prosecutions against the Nationalists on the charge of sedition. By doing so he made martyrs of them. Rebellion against the alien Dogra Raj was an act of the highest and the noblest patriotism in the eyes of Kashmiris. The accusation therefore helped than hindered the cause of the Nationalists. Had Kak been sagacious and instead of charging the Nationalists with having waged war against the Ruler brought them before a court of law for their heinous crimes of *goondaism* and hooliganism which had made them hateful, the Government would easily have secured the support of the majority of the State people. But *goondaism* and hooliganism when directed against democratic forces and the fighters for freedom were no crime in the eyes of the Dogra rulers and their reactionary Prime Ministers. The Kashmir Government cheerfully and disconcernedly looked at State politics so long as the Nationalists victimised their political opponents or the innocent people. Even when Abdullah preached general massacre of the adversaries of the National Conference and actually used a hockey-stick to beat them on roadside or illegally extorted money from shopkeepers, no action was taken. Only when the Nationalists began heaping abuses in public on the Maharaja and his family, the authorities were stirred into action.

In order to show that the State people were loyal to the Maharaja and approved the policy of his Government, Kak arranged a royal *durbar* on 15th July to which he invited all the seasoned and born loyalists such as *jagirdars*, *zaildars*, *numbardars*, business men, gentry and Government pensioners.

He also sent invitations to the leaders of all political parties excepting the National Conference. No programme of the *durbar* was circulated but it was reported that the Maharaja would grace it by his presence. Evidently Kak had grievously misunderstood his countrymen. The people did not oppose the Nationalists because of any love for the Dogra Rule. If Kashmiris hated the Nationalists because of their *goondaism* and gangsterism they hated the Dogra Raj no less for its despotism and autocracy. Had Kak been a statesman he should have realized this fact and simultaneously with the suppression of the National Conference encouraged and strengthened Democracy by liberalising the administration and by introducing revolutionary reforms in political, economic and social spheres. He should then have proved a messiah for the people. Unhappily he lost the opportunity. Most probably he did not even think about it. Nehru had called him Colonel Blimp and so he was.

Rightly did the leaders of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference and the Kashmir Socialist Party decline to attend the infamous *durbar*. As a matter of fact they told Kak that they felt outraged by being invited to it. Mir Waiz Usuf Shah was persuaded to politely refuse to participate though some less eminent leaders of the Muslim Conference gladly accepted the invitation.

The Maharaja, the Maharani and the Yuvraj condescended to show their faces through the balcony of their house at the Gulab Bhawan Palace. In the royal proclamation read at the *durbar* the Maharaja declared that "he would not tolerate any foreign intervention in the domestic affairs of the State" and advised the people, presumably through the "representative" assembly present, that "they should co-operate with his Government in the maintenance of law and order in the country".

The excesses of the Dogra soldiers, the anti-democratic actions of Premier Kak to totally suppress the urge of freedom among the people, the jubilation of the reactionary and communal Hindus at the dismal failure of the Quit Kashmir agitation, collectively helped the Nationalists to gain some ground

which they had lost during the past five years in the country This unnerved the top-ranking leaders of the Muslim Conference. Some of them consulted Jinnah. It was reported that he firmly advised that the Muslim Conference should in no way directly or indirectly lend its support to the agitation. The League President was of the opinion that as the Quit India movement had been started by the Congress with the dual purpose of overthrowing British rule and annihilating the Muslim League, similarly the aim of the Quit Kashmir agitation was to coerce the Maharaja to recognise the National Conference as the sole representative of the State people in utter disregard of the popularity of the Muslim Conference among the Kashmir Muslims. Quaide Azam Jinnah issued a statement declaring that "the Kashmir Muslims did not support the Quit Kashmir movement" but at the same time he "advised the Maharaja to remove the grievances of his subjects".

But it required the wisdom and political foresight of Jinnah to understand the implications of the Nationalist agitation. None of those comprising the High Command of the Muslim Conference in 1946 were endowed with these rare qualities. They were dazzled by the publicity which the Congress Press gave to the imprisoned Nationalists and their agitation. Soon they began to feel they were less patriotic than the Nationalists because they were outside the prison walls. Incapable of doing any constructive work in the field of politics, the leaders of the Muslim Conference remained mentally absorbed in search of a pretext to start an agitation against the Government. But it was evident that such actions, however laudable at any other time, would prove suicidal for the Muslim Conference in the circumstances in which the country was placed at the time. And Jinnah warned them against taking any such step. Yet, incredibly enough, the top most leaders were bent upon measuring swords with the Maharaja's Government.

In the middle of October the Muslim Conference leaders proposed to hold their annual session in Srinagar. True to his policy of repression, Kak refused them permission to do so. The

District Magistrate had imposed a ban on holding public meetings or carrying out processions in Srinagar. Should the Conference quietly accept the orders of the authorities and postpone the session to a future date or should they defy the ban and hold the session whatever the consequences? Opinion was divided in the High Command. Statesmanship demanded the adoption of the former course but extremists insisted on the latter. And Ghulam Abbas, never noted for far-sight, balance or moderation, led the extremists who won the day. A poorly attended meeting was held at Jama Masjid on the 24th of October where Abbas delivered a demagogic speech bitterly criticising the authorities for refusing permission to the Muslim Conference to hold its session. Presumably conscious of his own weakness and the rifts within the ranks of his organisation, he advised his colleagues not to follow him by continuing defiance of law. There appeared to be no sense in what he was doing but yet he was doing it. Next day the Government arrested four top ranking leaders of the Muslim Conference—Abbas, Aga Shaukat, Allah Rakha Sagar and Noor-ud-Din. They were all kept in detention.

The lead given by Abbas as we shall see presently proved really suicidal for the Muslim Conference and catastrophic for the country in general and the State Muslims in particular. It exposed the weaknesses of the Muslim Conference organisation and the inefficiency, incapability and unintelligence of its leadership Soon after the arrests, Mir Waiz Usuf and Hamid Ullah started quarrelling with each other as to who was to be the head of the Conference in the absence of Abbas. Both claimed to have received letters from their imprisoned chief nominating either as his successor. Unsurprisingly the followers of the Muslim Conference were utterly disgusted with the puerile and cantenkerous behaviour of their leaders. The imprisonment of Muslim Conference leaders at a time when Quit Kashmir agitation was virtually dead and the unseemly quarrel between Mir Waiz Usuf Shah and Hamid Ullah strengthened the position of the Nationalists and their organisation. It contributed to the great misfortune that befell Kashmir next year at the partition

of the subcontinent. The seeds of the disorganisation and chaos which are in evidence in Muslim Conference ranks at present on both sides of the cease-fire line were sown by Abbas and his close associates through this bankrupt policy.

Premier Kak, however, interpreted the debacle of the Muslim Conference as another addition to the feathers in his cap. Not only had he destroyed the National Conference he believed he had also finished the Muslim Conference. Thus, he thought, he had been eminently successful in putting the hands of the clock of progress back by sixteen years. He had shattered the backbone of the Freedom Movement and he had made the Maharaja the absolute ruler of his domains without fear of any rising or opposition in the near future. But still Kak's ambition was not at an end. Believe it or not he wanted to go down in history as a benevolent, progressive and patriotic administrator! He therefore thought of filling in the vacuum which had been created by the suppression of the two big political parties of the State. He collected a band of opportunists, loyalists, job-hunters and renegades and with their consultation he formed a new political organisation, All Jammu and Kashmir State People's Conference. "Kashmir people need an organisation of highly moral and incorruptible men. I am convinced the new Conference will meet the demand. The leaders so far in the field have been weighed and found wanting", Kak told me haughtily when I once tried to apprise him of the havoc that had been wrought in the countryside by Mustafa Malik a leading worker of the loyalist organisation by his high handed deeds. He added: "I do not believe there is any other public man comparable with Malik in honesty, in his devotion to public service and cause of the poor". We shall hear about Malik again.

Kak believed that he had created a weapon to handle the public life in the State. He therefore embarked on another adventure to deal one more blow at democracy. He held general elections to the Praja Sabha (Legislative Assembly) in the month of January, when it was beastly cold in the Valley and the electors very unwilling to go to the polls to record their votes. Even then as many as sixteen parties including the

Kisan Mazdoor Conference, the Muslim Conference, the Socialist Party, the National Conference, the Kashmir Pandit Conference, the Hindu Rajya Sabha and the Akali Party decided to take part in the elections. But before long it became obvious that by hook or by crook Kak was determined to get the nominees of the State People's Conference or those independent candidates returned to the Assembly who would become his "yes men" in the Legislature. The nomination papers of most of the Government critics were rejected On the day of the poll, 4th January, 1947, bundles of voting papers were distributed among the agents of Kak who put them in the boxes of the Government supporters with impunity From one end to the other the polling booths were infested with Kak's men persuading and intimidating people to vote for the loyalists. It was reported that the ballot boxes were also tampered with which is not surprising. The election was a complete farce. The composition of the Legislative Assembly thus elected can be imagined. The Nationalists decided to boycott the elections at the eleventh hour obviously feeling convinced that there was not a ghost of chance for any of their candidates to succeed. But they did not sit quietly On the polling day they organised groups of ruffians to attack candidates of other parties taking part in the elections and to intimidate and beat people going to vote.

Again Kak imagined that the successful termination of the farcical elections was another victory for him. He believed that he was growing stronger day by day It was now time to wipe out the last vestige of the Freedom Movement in the State which was still alive and kicking in the shape of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference and towards the achievement of this aim he devoted his attention.

In contrast to the Muslim Conference leadership the top ranking men of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference were devoting their resources, their energies and their influence to the education of the people in the countryside. They were peacefully doing some constructive work. They had opened a Kisan High School at Dyalgam to educate and train children of the working classes for the future leadership of the country This institution was

run on the donations and funds supplied by the peasants. In the middle of November 1946 a band of Kisan leaders numbering thirty-six including Abdus Salam Yatu and Prem Nath Bazaz made extensive tours in the Anantnag tehsil. For a fortnight they travelled from village to village meeting local workers and addressing public meetings which were attended by thousands. At the end of the tour a mass meeting was held at Anantnag on the 17th November. It was a challenge to the Nationalists who having lost ground in the countryside still believed that the town was their stronghold and no meeting could be held here without their permission. But they were disillusioned and felt helpless because ten thousand peasants had come to attend the meeting.

On 5th and 6th April, 1947 the Working Committee and the General Council of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference met at Achhabal to review the political situation. The British Government had issued a declaration on the 20th February creating two blocs in the Constituent Assembly of India which had come into existence as a result of the plan formulated by the Cabinet Mission and accepted by the Congress and the Muslim League. The General Council of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference adopted four resolutions. It welcomed the declaration of the British Government regarding independence of India and advised the Maharaja to have friendly relations with both the blocs in the Constituent Assembly but remain aloof from either. The Council demanded the establishment of full responsible government in the State; it deprecated communal activities as harmful and dangerous.

The judicious, balanced and cautious lead given by the Kisan Mazdoor leaders was palatable neither to the Nationalists nor to Kak Government. The former were, rightly or wrongly, frightened that this organisation was slowly but steadily filling up the vacuum that had been created by Kak's policy of oppression and suppression and the people were attracted by the progressive, secular and libertarian ideals of the Socialists; and Kak himself thought that his mission was being foiled by the quiet, unostentatious and constructive activities of the Kisan Maz-

door leaders. Both therefore became impatient to nip in the bud the growing plant of democracy in Kashmir.

On the night of 11th April, Prem Nath Bazaz, who had throughout accompanied the tour of the Kisan leaders and taken part in the deliberations of the General Council, was shot at at short range from behind by three men while he was returning home from his office. He was seriously wounded and taken to hospital where he lay hovering between life and death for many days. Three workers of the National Conference were arrested by the police and held responsible for the crime. They were tried and committed to the Sessions Court but were however acquitted and released oon after the National Conference came to power in November, 1947.

Abdus Salam Yatu, President of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference, was arrested on 12th May 1946 on the charge of having made on 25th February a speech in village Vanihama. He had said that "the Kisan Mazdoor Conference is determined to end the present system of Government in the State". Yatu was tried and sentenced to two months rigorous imprisonment. He appealed to the Sessions Judge and pleaded that to end any system of government was within the rights of any citizen according to the accepted interpretation of law on the subject. Yatu's appeal was accepted.

Undaunted, Kak Government only a month later launched three criminal prosecutions against certain active and enthusiastic Kisan leaders, including Yatu, accusing them of having assaulted State servants at Khushipura. This was done at the instance of Mustafa Malik, leader of the State People's Conference, a pet of Kak who believed Kisan workers to be so many thorns in his path. The accused were arrested and lodged in jail.

While reaction and persecution were in complete charge of the political affairs in Kashmir, revolution was in full swing outside in British India. Having felt that Lord Wavell had failed to solve the Indian tangle to the satisfaction of all concerned, the British Government replaced him by Lord Mountbatten with wide discretionary authority to arrive at a settle-

ment. The new Viceroy worked with feverish speed and uncommon zeal. The British Labour Government had thrown a challenge to the Indian leadership of all communities by making a bold declaration that the British would in any case quit India before June 1948. After making personal inquiries on the spot Lord Mountbatten recommended that the British should quit earlier as otherwise it might prove disastrous. The declaration and the uncertainty about the future created a highly disturbed atmosphere in northern and eastern India. Communal riots broke out on a colossal scale and men, women and children began to be slaughtered as sheep and goats. Panic and helplessness were writ large on all faces.

Lord Mountbatten held lengthy and repeated consultations with leaders of all the main political parties in the country. After much toil and with tremendous efforts he was finally successful in evolving a plan for the solution of the Indian problem which carried the approval of all the three leading parties—National Congress, Muslim League and Akali Dal. By the middle of May the Viceroy proceeded to London with the plan to secure the sanction of the British Government.

Now the Congress leaders knew what was coming. The subcontinent was to be partitioned on the religious basis. The question was where would Kashmir go? Nehru wanted it to remain with India. So did other Congress leaders though not so passionately as he. But having accepted the principle of division on religious basis, how could they force Kashmir to join India? Would the overwhelming majority of Muslims in the State agree to the accession? In any case it was evident that so long as the National Conference and the Maharaja were at daggers drawn, there was no chance of Kashmir joining with India in any future set-up. Therefore the pressing need of the hour was to bring the Maharaja and the Nationalists together. If both were made fully aware of the coming danger that the Hindu ruler and the National Conference would have to face by the creation of the Muslim State of Pakistan, they might bury the hatchet and embrace each other. It fell to the lot of Acharya Kripalani, Congress President, to accomplish this task.

Achraya Kripalani reached Srinagar on the 17th May. He remained in Kashmir for about a week and met the Maharaja, Premier Kak and prominent Nationalist leaders outside prison. The Congress President was convinced that the Quit Kashmir movement was abusive and mischievous and unless the leaders withdrew it there would be no compromise between the National Conference and the Kashmir Government. In a statement he denounced the slogan saying that the Maharaja was a son of the State and it was absurd to ask him to quit. In his opinion there could be no comparison between the Quit Kashmir agitation and the Quit India movement because the British were aliens and had been rightly asked to quit. Acharaya Kripalani also disapproved of the slogan denouncing the Treaty of Amritsar by saying that Raja Gulab Singh had acquired the State, as was not unknown during those days, by payment of money. Kripalani's observations were yet the best triumph for Kak but fate no more helped him and this proved to be the last.

The Mountbatten Plan was published on 3rd June on the return of the Viceroy from London. According to the Plan the subcontinent of India was to become independent on 15th of August 1947. This hastened a metamorphosis in the affairs of the State. By his foolish deeds Kak had by now entirely alienated the Muslim community and the progressive sections inside the country. The prospect of the State joining Pakistan by the vote of the Muslim majority, the panic caused by the communal riots outside the State and massacre of non-Muslims in Muslim majority areas made State Hindus friendly towards the National Conference. Indeed they began to clamour for the release of Abdullah and his colleagues. Nationalists took the fullest advantage of this psychological change and by all means at their command enhanced the panic and struck terror in the minds of Hindus, by invoking the bogey of Pakistan and Muslim communalism.

In accordance with the provisions of the Mountbatten Plan a referendum was held in the Congress ruled N.W.F.P. to ascertain the views of the Pathans regarding the accession of that province. The Congress had contended that the people of

the province wanted to be with India. It appeared plausible as in the general elections of 1946 the people had voted the Congress Party to power. But in the referendum the same electorate gave the verdict to join Pakistan. This result further unnerved the Hindus of the Kashmir State. They thought or were made to believe that their only hope lay in the Nationalist Muslims who, for good and obvious reasons, were shouting from house tops that they were enemies of Pakistan and wanted the State to join India. Abdullah had sent (presumably smuggled) a letter from his prison in Bhadrawah to a friend in Jammu, saying that the Maharaja should declare his accession to India and not be misled by the declarations of the Muslim Conference leaders who advised the Dogra Maharaja to remain independent.

Even these cataclysmic changes did not move Kak and he refused to make any changes in his policy. Exasperated the Kashmiri Pandits Conference in the month of June passed a resolution of no confidence in the Pandit Premier. They thus cut their nose to spite their face. Nevertheless this strengthened the position of the Nationalists in State politics.

Kripalani's public condemnation of the Quit Kashmir agitation annoyed Nehru. It appears the reports about the latest changes and developments in the State reached the Congress circles. They had also come to know that the Maharaja had become doubtful, wavering and nervous and was sharing the panic of his Hindu subjects. It was surmised that where others had failed, Mahatma Gandhi would succeed in influencing the Maharaja to come to terms with the Nationalists. And the Mahatma yielded before Nehru's persuasion.

The intelligent, experienced and realist Gandhi was fully conscious of the risks involved in the task. Before leaving for Kashmir the Mahatma made an announcement in a post-prayer meeting at New Delhi that he had no political mission in the State and that he was going there to fulfil an old pledge given to the late Maharaja Pratap Singh in 1919 at the *Kumb Mela* to visit the country. The Mahatma reiterated this statement at Rawalpindi. He reached Srinagar on 1st. August and re-

turned via Jammu on the 3rd. During the brief stay in Kashmir he met the Maharaja, Kak, prominent Hindus and the Nationalist leaders. An attempt was made by certain Socialists to interview him but the Nationalists in charge of his camp refused this. An open letter explaining the democratic side of the issue facing Kashmir was despatched by Prem Nath Bazaz to the Mahatma's address through registered post but it was never acknowledged. It was, however, published in *The Hamdard* on the 2nd. August. Mahatma Gandhi attended various receptions and public meetings but never uttered a word at any function. He had promised not to make any speeches.

From the very outset Muslims were apprehensive about Gandhiji's visit. Despite his solemn pronouncement that he had no political ends to achieve in the State every child in Kashmir believed that he had come to repair the broken alliance between the Dogra Maharaja and the Kashmir Nationalists. That Gandhi was not talking only weather and fulfilling his promise while in Kashmir is clear from his notes he wrote to Sardar Patel during those days. "Kak had written to the Maharaja. He will send you a copy. He showed it to me," wrote the Mahatma on August 6th from Lahore. "He has sweet tongue. I had an hour with the Maharaja and the Maharani. He agreed that he must follow the will of the people but he did not come to the point. So he sent to me his Special Secretary to express regrets. He wishes to remove Kak. He is only wondering how. It is almost decided to have Sir Jailal. You have evidently something to do about this. In my view the Kashmir situation can be improved".[1] On his way to Srinagar the Mahatma s car was stoned near Baramulla and Sangrama. Again in Srinagar while going to meet Begum Abdullah he witnessed similar incidents. Of course all these facts were never allowed to be published in the Congress Press.

Mahatma Gandhi left the State on 3rd. August. Only a week after his departure the Maharaja accepted the resignation of Kak and appointed the septuagenarian Dogra General Janak

[1] Gandhiji's letters to Sardar Patel published in *The Hindustan Times* dated 29 June 1952.

Singh as the new Prime Minister. The Nationalists were extremely jubilant at the removal of Kak. Hundreds of them collected on 11th August in the Secretariat compound to give an ovation to the General. They garlanded his car when he arrived and repeatedly raised the slogan "long live Janak Singh", "*Maharaja Bahadur ki Jai* and *National Conference Zindabad* So in this way Abdullah had taken the revenge from the children of Gulab Singh for his treachery! Tho Dogra ruler and the Treaty of Amritsar were still there. Only the Kashmiri Prime Minister had been replaced by the Dogra General. And the Nationalists celebrated the triumph with illuimunations. What a triumph indeed !

With the appointment of Janak Singh the uncertainty about the future of the State was removed and it became clear that the Maharaja and his Government no less than the National Conference had lined up with the Congress. This caused a grave tension in the State, particularly in the Valley. The Muslims were deeply enraged at the turn the events had taken. Clashes between the followers of the Muslim Conference and the National Conference started almost immediately.

This was the state of affairs in Kashmir on the eve of 15th August 1947. The subcontinent was making grand preparations for the Day of Independence and the people of the State were rapidly heading for a catastrophe.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE CULTURAL RENAISSANCE

THE progress that the people of Kashmir had made during the ancient and the medieval times in the cultural spheres could not be maintained when the country was enslaved and unenlightened aliens ruled over it who were interested more in extortion and suppression than in the mental or spiritual advancement of the ruled. Even during the days of later Mughals the Valley had ceased to be the fountain-head of learning and art and was looked upon no more than a pleasure garden where the ruling classes came and sojourned to enjoy their holidays. Yet the Kashmiris struggled and kept the torch of culture burning as best they could.

Whatever the rulers did in the sphere of politics the enslaved people forgot their religious differences and strengthened the basis of composite nationalism with redoubled vigour. Throughout the length and breadth of the Valley scores of Hindu and Muslim saints appeared who preached the cult of Religious Humanism which was the intellectual foundation on which Kashmir Nationalism had been reared. Kaha Nov, Min Shah, Bata Mol, Zain Shah, Shukr Shah and Rishi Mol are some of the distinguished among these missionaries of the humanist faith. Even to this day Hindus and Muslims in the Valley hold them equally in high regard. In religion they represent the essence of Kashmir culture. The annual festivals held at their shrines and tombs are attended by members of both the communities who solemnly pay their homage and make customary presents. Similarly there are several religious places in the Valley which are considered holy and worshipful equally by Hindus and Muslims. Legally they belong either to the one community or the other but spiritually they are the common property of both. Of the three parties which arrange the India-wide known

pilgrimage to the holiest Hindu shrine of Swami Amar Nath situated in the eastern mountains of the Kashmir Valley, one is that of Maliks, a Muslim tribe, the traditional guides to the sacred cave. Conversion to Islam has not in any way altered their status or faith in the shrine. To this day the Maliks get equal share from the offerings made at the shrine by the pilgrims, along with the *purohits* of Mattan and the *sadhus* in charge of the *Chhari* (Staff used as emblem) which leads the *Yatra*. The Muslims of Toola Moola and the surrounding villages swear by the Hindu goddess Khirbhawani when about to make any solemn declaration. As a matter of fact there is hardly any shrine, temple or *khanqah* of importance in the Valley which is not looked upon by the local people with reverence without any consideration of creed or caste. The spread of Religious Humanism has changed the complexion of both Hinduism and Islam in the Valley so much so that orthodox outsiders are often disagreeably puzzled at the phenomenon. For instance incredible as it appears to non-Kashmiri Hindus and Muslims, the dead bodies of Kashmiri Pandits are cremated by Kashmir Muslims (ancient *Kirats* now *Kavuj*) who have been doing this work from times long before they were converted to Islam.

The literary pursuits of the people of the Valley also underwent a great change during the period of slavery. Sanskrit no more enjoyed the place of honour and no books were written in this language by any Kashmiri. Adjusting themselves to the change of times the intellectual classes learnt Persian, the court language under the Muslims and made valuable contributions to Religion, Philosophy, History, Astronomy and other sciences through this medium. Simultaneously they began to enrich their own dialect, the tongue spoken by the masses in the Valley.

We have already noted that Shati Kanth, a Kashmiri Brahmin, who flourished in the thirteenth century and wrote *Mahanay Prakash*, is the first known author in this dialect. This book has been published by the State Research Department. It is difficult to say if some one preceded Shati Kanth in reducing Kashmiri language to writing as no other book writ-

ten before his times is extant. But there can be no doubt that considerable literature must have been produced during the two succeeding centuries so that in the time of Shah Miri Sultans the nobles as well as the kings took great delight in reciting poems in the Kashmiri language. Hasan Shah was so enamoured of it that he liked to chant the melodious Kashmiri songs and hear them from the court musicians in preference to the songs in other languages. As we know Lal Ded and Nund Rishi, the two leading apostles of the composite Kashmir culture, gave their messages in the language that the masses spoke and nothing has come down to us from their sayings which might have been in Sanskrit or Persian.

Despite the indifference, if not the hostility, of the foreign rulers Kashmiri poetry and music continued to make a steady progress in the Mughal rule which culminated in the glorious contribution which Habba Khatun, the accomplished spouse of Usuf Shah Chak, made to it by inventing the *Rast Rag*.

Human culture has no chance to prosper when barbarians rule a country. Men of letters, artists, and master builders flourish in peaceful times under the patronage of noble and enlightened rulers. It is therefore not surprising that with the coming of Pathans when the dark years of tyranny started cultural activities in the Valley gradually came to a stop. We do not hear of any great achievements in the domain of letters and arts during the latter half of the eighteenth and the whole of the nineteenth centuries. The few men who were born in this period and who struggled to rise in spite of the adverse circumstances and uncongenial environments are but pigmies when compared with the master minds of the ancient ages.

Mention has already been made of the few authors whose works are in Persian and who lived during this dark period of our history. A larger number of Kashmiri writers expressed their thoughts and ideas in their mother tongue. As a matter of fact the real Kashmir of the time lives in Kashmiri poetry than in Persian Muse. For while the composers in Persian mostly imitated the mode, style and thought of the authors and thinkers of Iran, those expressing hemselves in

Kashmiri kept the essence of Kashmir culture, its basic truths, fundamental principles, traditions and usages, alive. True there is little originality in these writings and they do not belong to a very high order yet there is no doubt that it is in these that we can clearly discern the soul of Kashmir desperately struggling for life when it had been all but killed by the cruel, bigoted and despotic foreign rulers.

All the Kashmiri literature is in poetry. No book has been written in prose. Kashmiri is written in three different scripts. Originally when the language was born in or before the thirteenth century, *Sharda* the indigenous script used by the ancient Kashmiri authors for writing books in Sanskrit, was adopted for it also. This practice continued in the time of the Shah Miri kings. But when the Persian became the official language and medium of communication among the educated classes, the Muslims gradually began to write Kashmiri in Persian characters. In the beginning of the twentieth century Sharda fell into disuse and the Kashmiri Hindus started to utilise Devanagri script in its place. At present books in Kashmiri are being printed in Persian as well as Devanagri scripts. Recently attempts have been made to invent special common characters, on the basis of the Persian script, for the language in order that all the sounds including the ones peculiar to Kashmiri may be appropriately represented. So far these endeavours have not been crowned with success.

Scholars are divided about the origin of the Kashmiri language. Some believe that it is the direct descendent of Sanskrit which was spoken in the ancient times by all the people living in the Valley. In course of time Prakrit replaced Sanskrit as the language of the masses which slowly assumed the shape of Kashmiri during the medieval times. Others, however, hold that Kashmiri belongs to the group of Dardic languages which were spoken by the Aryans settled along the foot of the Hindu Kush range of mountains and is more akin to Iranian than to Sanskrit. Be that as it may; Kashmiri as written by its authors in the past has assumed two complexions like Hindustani in India. The Hindus are inclined to employ more

Sanskrit words which makes it unintelligible to Muslims and the Muslim poets in their turn have been burdening their productions with Persian and Arabic words which the Hindus cannot easily comprehend. However this is only one side of the picture. There have been many exceptions to this rule even in early times when poets have deliberately and consistently refused to employ words that the masses did not speak in their every day life. It goes without saying that such poets have been more popular in the Valley while others have been studied and sung only in the circle of scholars.

The introduction of Western ideas and the spread of knowledge and learning under the British suzerainty gave an impetus to movement for the cultural resurgence. In the time of Maharaja Pratap Singh the education department was reorganised on modern scientific lines. Primary schools were started in big villages, middle schools in the towns and high schools in the cities. In the beginning of the twentieth century two colleges were founded one of them now known as S. P. College, in Srinagar. In the days of Hari Singh additions were made to the number of schools and colleges when girls education also received due attention mainly through the endeavours of the Women's Welfare Trust, a non-official organisation devoted to the welfare and uplift of the fair sex. Christian missionaries, notably C. Y. Tyndale Biscoe, made a remarkable contribution to the spread of modern education in the Valley. Kashmiris owe a debt of gratitude to the Mission Schools which did tremendous pioneer work in this field. Some schools were started by other indigenous private organisations, mostly denominational, devoted to the cause of education. From the portals of these institutions have emerged politicians, authors, poets and scholars who man the intellectual professions and form the intelligentsia of the Kashmir society.

Since the dawn of modernism in the Valley not only have more and more works been produced year after year, the thought also has begun to have refinement, depth, subtlety and lucidity. With the elemental upsurge in 1931 the Kashmir mind awakened and the movement for cultural renaissance took

birth. There are at present scores of poets spread throughout the Valley composing in Kashmiri, a few of them of a high order whose productions leave no doubt in the mind of a critic that the Valley is slowly coming to its own.

The Kashmiri literature, voluminous as it is, may be divided into four main parts (1) Mystic philosophy, (2) Love lyrics, (3) Didactic and narrative art, (4) Patriotic poetry. Whether a poem belongs to one category or the other it is deeply influenced by indigenous culture. The mystic philosophy of the Kashmir poets follows in the footsteps of Lal Ded and Nund Rishi. The love lyrics, the folk songs and the fairy tales are woven round the romances of Himal and Nagray, Lolare and Bombur, the romantic figures which have come down from ancient Hindu ages, or round Zohara Khotan and Haya Band, the celebrated names which are as fresh today as when they were first introduced in literature by Kashmiri authors centuries ago. To these have been added themes and tales undoubtedly of foreign origin such as "Laila Majnun", "Shirin Farhad", "Yusuf Zulaikha", "Rama Sita" and "Nala Damyanti" with such modifications and variations as to make them suitable for local taste.

The earliest phase of Kashmir poetry was dominated by the mystic songs and poems. The *Mahanay Prakash* is a treatise on Shaivism and the sayings of Lal Ded and Nund Rishi are also mostly mystical. But the centuries that followed the times of these saints saw the birth of love lyrics called *lol* in Kashmiri. Of the many known and unknown poets of *lol* the most celebrated is Habba Khatun, a rustic girl on whom fortune smiled for a while but who was overcome by grief during the greater part of her life and till the very end of her days. In the music of her songs are enshrined the sweet memories of her childhood. She sang :

"I left my home for play but returned not when the day sank in the west
I came of noble parentage and made a name as Habba Khatun.
I passed through crowds drawing tight my veil
But people flocked to see me
And ascetics hurried out of woods
When the day sank in the West".

Habba Khatun was a born poet. Unhappily like Lalla she was married in an orthodox family to a boy of conservative views who disliked the love songs composed by her. Being a musician Habba sang them too in a sweet charming tune. That became simply intolerable for her husband and his parents. She was persecuted and ill-treated. The agony and mental affliction that she had to undergo were great but she could not suppress the Muse in her. The songs that came on to her lips were full of emotion and pathos. They are touching. Addressing the beloved she sings:

"In *henna* I dyed my hands,
When will he come
It's love should come to me, bedecked.
Come, still my craving,
I am dying for thee·
Without thee how shall I fill my days ?
I cannot endure separation from thee."

Or again:

"The distant meadows are in bloom,
Has thou not heard my plaint?
Flowers bloom on mountain lakes
Come, let us to mountain meads;
Has thou not heard my plaint?"

Habba's fame as a poetess and a musician travelled far and wide. One day when she was singing in the company of her friends King Usuf Shah Chak heard her and fell in love with her. Both were ready to become life partners. A marriage was arranged and Habba became the queen of Kashmir. But this did not last long. For soon after in 1586 A.C. Usuf Shah was deposed by Akbar and disallowed to return to Kashmir. The separation from her beloved caused poignant pain and Habba became almost mad with grief. But the intensity of emotion only lent an additional charm to her songs. She left the royal palace, her home, and wandered about in the Valley endlessly in hills and dales, riversides and lakes singing of the beauties of nature with the one burden of her songs—"Tell me when will my lord return ?":

"Say friend, when will fate smile on me,
And my love come to me again ? Say when ?

I've waited long and patiently,
My heart is numb and idle and empty of hopes.
Sweet is the ritual of love
I would deck my love with ornament,
And in *henna* dye his hands.
I would anoint his body with fragrant kisses
And offer him wine in golden goblets.
The lotus of love which blooms in the lake of my heart,
Say, friend, when will fate smile on me?
Go forth and call him, friend,
I've made posies of flowers for him,
Over passes high I carried him wine,
But he is roaming mid distant glades.
O, why is he roaming in far off glades?
O, where is he drunk with my rival's wine?
In his absence like jasmine I will fade;
I've made posies of flowers for him.

What would she not do for her beloved:

"Come! my dear come! let us go out to collect lettuces
The people are speaking ill of me,
But who can alter one's destiny?
Come! my lover of flowers."

Or again:

"I shall bestrew the meadows with flowers for thee
Come; my lover of flowers."

Poor Habba was quite ignorant of politics and could not understand that her lord would never return. The closing days of her life were full of sorrow and suffering. She spent them in the Valley of Gurez where people respected her. In her honour a local hill in that region is called Habba Bal. Broken-hearted, exhausted and weak she returned to Srinagar where she died and was buried near Pantachhuk, also known as Atha Vajjan. Recently the Nationalists revived her memory by celebrating a day when her grave was repaired and a small grassy plot with flower-beds was planted round it

Much is not known about the poets who followed Habba Khatun for nearly two hundred years. Nothing worthy of mention has come down. Possibly it was not preserved; possibly the production was poor in quality. One of the notable poets of this period is Habib Ullah Naushahri. He has written devotional religious poems.

By the middle of the eighteenth century was born Arnimal a Brahmin girl, who flowered into a brilliant poetess and has left her mark on the Kashmir literature. She was married with Bhawani Dass Kachru Nikku who was himself a remarkable poet in Persian. For unknown reasons the marriage proved unhappy. It appears Bhawani Dass deserted her and the sensitive girl was deeply pained. But the tragedy made Arnimal the most melodious and sweetest of poets and musicians. There is more of pathos and grief in her lyrics than joy of life or delight in living. But she speaks of simple natural love free from any spiritual or mystical experience:

"(Owing to pangs of separation) my complexion
which was like July jessamine
Has assumed the pallor of the yellow rose
O, When will he come and let me have
A look at his beloved face!

The moans and sobs of Arnimal are touching. She has become the object of taunts. Her days pass in waiting and yearning:

"When will thy feet touch my courtyard
I would place them on my head, O, come!
For love, I left my home and hearth,
And tore the veil, O come!
I was a famous beauty once and now
I have faded in my teens, O come!"

Again:

My love, my jasmine, my jasmine
I long for thee
Come, O, Come!
I long for thee.
I plighted, when young, my troth to thee;
Why didst thou break thy plighted troth?
O, Sweet, O, Dear,
I long for thee."

Arnimal's mastry over language is clear from the way in which she uses words in different senses. In some poems she weaves patterns out of her own name which translated literally means "garland of *arni* roses":

"I was a full bloom summer jasmine
But for him I've turned as pale as *arni* rose

Say, friend, when will my love come unto me;
Say, when?"

Young widows and deserted wives in Kashmir generally return to their parents and live for the rest of their lives under the father's roof. The sight of garden full of flowers in bloom remind Arni of her love. She is also reminded of her plight:

"Flowers have bloomed in my father's home ;
But thou comest not and I feel like one
Accursed, alone, and mocked by all".

She is reminded of her misfortune. Her tender way of expression and depth of feeling are remarkable:

"Hardly had I, a budding *hourie*, bathed me in sandal oil
When he, love, did flee from me, O, friend".

But like true lovers Arni is not frustrated or dismayed but feels delighted to know that her lover is happy. She says:

"My rivals are flinging taunts at me
Since the beloved has ceased to speak to me;
Won't he come for a short while, and show me
His face, so that I should offer
My arterial blood as sacrifice for his safety ?
God grant happiness to my beloved.
Let him be kind to others (and forget me) if he will.
Enough for me is the satisfaction (coupled with
A remote hope of restoration to his beloved)
That he, at least, is happy".

In her advanced age Arnimal passed her time at the spinning wheel. The sound of the wheel could not but remind her of the tragic story of her life. She sang the most popular of her songs:

"Murmur not my spinning wheel
Thy straw-rings I will oil
From under the sod, O, Hyacinth,
Rise thy stately form;
For, look, the Narcissus is waiting
With cups of wine for thee,
Once faded, will the jasmine bloom again ?"

The importance of the love songs composed by Habba and Arni lies in this that they echo the passions, yearnings, sufferings and sorrows of the common women ; they come from the bottom of the hearts of the poetesses and for that reason

produce a tremendous effect on the minds of men and women who sing them. These songs are of an abiding, perennial value and form a part of classics in the Kashmir literature. There is hardly a home in the Valley where these songs are not sung alike by the educated and the illiterate, men as well as women.

After Arnimal many poets appeared in Kashmir whose writings have been preserved and several of them are also published. Among the notable earlier writers are Prakash Bhat, the author of *Ramavatar Charita* (life of Rama) and *Lava Kush Charita* (lives of Lava and Kusha) and Sahib Kaul who wrote *Krishna Avatar Charita* and *Janama Charita* (Life of Lord Krishna): Mulla Faqir who is known for his odes died about the close of the eighteenth century. He was followed by Mir Abdullah Baihaqi (1807 A.C.) whose *masnavi Kashir Aqaid*, is an interesting poetic piece. He also composed *Mukhtassar Waqayah* (a religious poem). Ganga Prasad who was probably a contemporary of Baihaqi wrote *Sansar-maya-moh zal Sukh-dukh-charita.* Prakash Ram who lived in the days of Sukh Jiwan Mal, Sikh Governor, is the author of a legendary poem *Akanandun* and the famous epic *Ramayana.*

A remarkable figure among the Kashmir poets was Mahmud Gami of Shahabad who is the author of *Yusuf Zulaikha, Laila Majnun, Shirin-o-Khusrav, Harun-ul-Rashid* and *Sheikh Sanan*. Gami thoroughly copies poets of Iran in every respect and was called Nizami of Kashmir by his admirers. His *Yusuf Zulaikha* has been translated into German by Karl Friedrick Burkhard. Gami preached universal love but his poetry is mystical. Says he:

> "Tear open the veil of thy malice
> And thou shalt see the Monarch with his viceroy seated.
> Go forward, fear not frowns and frets.
> How live you on water ?
> The Form and the Reality are like dream and its interpretation.
> The two are as the rose and its perfume.
> Really all the veils are removed from him who is one with Him.
> How live you on water ?"

Mahmud Gami died in 1855 A.C. and was buried at Arwadri near Doru where a simple rustic memorial still stands over his grave in a dilapidated condition.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century Walli Ullah Mattu wrote a charming *masnavi*, entitled *Himal* and Abdul Ahad Nazim composed a love poem *Zain-ul-Arab*.

Pandit Nand Ram who is popularly known in the Valley by the name of Swami Parmanand flourished in the middle of the nineteenth century. He was born in 1791 A.C. at Mattan and was employed as a patwari. He shines like a luminous star on the firmament of Kashmiri literature. His command over language, fertile imagination, wit in expression and depth of thought are uncommon. Through his writings he enriched Kashmiri as very few others had done before him. Parmanand was not only a litterateur but also a religious reformer, a mystic philosopher, a devotee and a staunch supporter of Religious Humanism. In his middle age he decided to spend all his energy and time in spreading his views and for doing so he resigned the Government job.

Parmanand was well versed in Persian as well as Sanskrit. He could compose poems using words of both, neither or either of these languages. He is popular among all classes of people in the Valley. When he resigned his job Saleh Ganai, the Muslim *muqqadam* of the village continued to pay him his salary till the end of his life.

The best known works of Parmanand are *Sudama Charita*, *Radha Swayamvar*, *Dinkrandan* and *Shiv lagan*. Selected portions from these have been translated by one of his devotees, Master Zind Koul.

Parmanand is the best interpreter of the philosophy of Shaivism in Kashmir. In his poems there is no escapism of the Vedantin. The universe exists: it is real, it is good; it is a *leela*, a dance of Shiva. But one should know how to live and how to enjoy. He says:

"To die while one is alive is excellent sport.
It is meditation on one's self;
The contemplation of the self apart from the Ego."

And:

"Wherein every thing is absorbed
There is no room for the Ego.

That is called God."

Again :

"By the burning breath of love
Every particle will be ablaze.
And water will serve as oil."

According to Parmanand righteous action and contentment lead to success :

"Strengthen the field of action
With the loom of righteousness
Then sow the seed of contentment
Which will yield the harvest of bliss."

Parmanand loved music and dancing. Often when among the gathering of his select disciples and friends, he himself danced singing his own devotional poems. He died in 1879 A.C.

Another remarkable poet was Maqbul Shah of the village Kralawari who composed a number of poems including *Gulrez*, *Greestnama*, *Pirnama*, *Mullanama*, *Baharnama*, *Mansoornama* and *Ayubnama*. He was a born poet and could compose at a moment's notice on any subject. His language is sweet, elegant satirical and full of humour. His verses are rich in imagery :

"The pomegranate trees were full of red flowers,
The nightingale took them to be on fire
And flew away."

Again

"The verdure was spread like a carpet of green velvet
Whereupon petals of flowers were scattering gold and silver coins."

Rasul Mir is a great poet of Shahabad. He excels Mahmud Gami and Maqbul Shah, because unlike these two he deprecated the use of difficult words and maintained the chastity of Kashmiri language. His style is simple, direct and easily intelligible. In sweetness and charm he has few rivals. Rasul Mir has inspired many a modern poets by his ideas and thoughts. Even Mahjur, the great national poet of modern Kashmir, acknowledges that the inspiration for his poetry came from Rusul Mir.

Rusul Mir was sick of idleness and believed that man was born to be active and change his fate by his own efforts:

"Crave not for pearls while thou art on the shore
Dive deep into the depths of the sea
Make garlands of jewels and weave wreaths of pearls.

And:

"Shake thy lethargic body with dauntless courage
If you act like the ignorant you are lost
Bestir thyself to lop down the cypress of obstruction
Make garlands of tulips, make wreaths of pearls."

Abdul Wahab Pare known also as Wahab Khar, was a prolific writer. He was born in 1845 A.C. in the village of Hajjin. He belonged to a middle class family and served in the Revenue Department rising to the position of *Naib* Tehsildar. He translated *Shahnama* of Firdusi and *Akbarnama* of Hamid-ullah besides several other Persian works into Kashmiri verse. Among the noteworthy of his original works are (1) *Haft Qissa-i-Makrizan*, (2) *Qissa-i-Chahar Darvesh*, (3) *Qissa-i-Bahramgoor*, (4) *Sailabnama*, and (5) *Kari-Patwar*. Abdul Wahab has also left a *Devan* in Kashmiri verse comprising 767 odes.

Abdul Wahab is known as Firdusi of Kashmir. The description given by him of the fight between Rustam and Suhrab in the Kashmiri verse is as vivid and graphic as in the Persian *Shahnama*. But Pare is no less admirable in his philosophical poems than in his translations. His views on childhood in retrospective mood are worth quoting:

"O my childhood! you played a trick
With me like a juggler
O childhood you are fleeting and unreliable

* * * *

"You *deodar* of the forest, the saw (of time).
Has cut thee into little bits
And reduced thee to dust

* * * *

"Just now you were like the mountain torrent
Flooded and sweeping away whole hills
But now there is nothing in you but the dust of dryness."

Abdul Wahab Pare died in his seventieth year in 1914 A.C.

Asad Pare (1862-1923 A.C.) an illiterate rustic was another poet of Hajjin.

Ramzan Bhat of village Dharamunah in Badgam tehsil has achieved undying fame by composing the ballad *Akanandun*. Its style is simple, vigorous and forceful. It is a pathetic story of parents sacrificing their son to fulfil a promise. The *Sadhu* demands:

"O woman, where is thy Akanandun?

Looking so bright among his class fellows ;
If yau have the heart,
Offer him as a sacrifice today".

The innocent boy appealingly asks his mother :

"O mother ! do not beat your breast
He must be a monster, a *Jin* or the Devil himself ;
Say unto him : "Forgive us O' forgive us."

The grim murder scene is depicted :

Mother Ratna caught him by the hands and feet,
Crying, O God, my God, O how cruel !
His own father did cut his throat"

And the final triumph of Truth and Morality when Akanandun came back to life :

"Mother Ratna came out to call him
Weeping and about to choke with grief
She called him aloud
And down he came from the heavens."

Akanandun is divided into seven parts. It is a very popular ballad in the countryside particularly among the women folk of the Valley. Some other poets including Ahad Zargar, Samad Mir and Ali Wani attempted to versify it but none could reach the lucidity and clarity which Ramzan Bhat had been able to achieve.

Maulvi Siddiq Ullah who died in 1900 A.C. translated the *Sikandarinama* of Nizami into Kashmiri verse. His other published and unpublished works number about a dozen.

Among the poets who flourished in the beginning of this century mention may be made of the lyricist Aziz Ullah Haqqani who composed love ballads and sweet musical poems which have been collected and published in a book form called the *Ghazliat-i-Haqqani*. To Haqqani love and hardship are inalienable. He says :

"Nothing but tribulation is the way of love.
The lover must not live without tribulation."

Haqqani was a vedantin : He used to declare :

"The same came out of the same
He has neither body nor substance."

Lakshman Ji of Nagam was a disciple of Parmanand and is the author of the Kashmiri version of *Nala Damyanti* besides several devotional poems. He is a believer in cause and effect.

"I had to reap what I had sown
My running about the fields and farms had
been vain and useless ;
When tares are sown in the spring,
How can wheat be reaped in the autumn?"

Another disciple of Parmanand was Krishan Das of village Vanpoh who died in 1925. He is the author of a beautiful melodious poem *Shiv lagan* which has been published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.

The twentieth century saw Kashmiri as a considerably developed language with ample literature from which to draw. Western Scholars and linguists were forced to take note of it. Ishvar Koul, a Kashmiri Pandit, prepared *Kashmira Shabdamrita*, a grammar of Kashmiri language in Sanskrit. It was edited by the eminent orientalist, Sir George Grierson, and was published by the Royal Asiatic Society in 1898 A. C. It was Rev. Wade another orientalist and a missionary who compiled the first grammar of Kashmiri. He also translated the New Testament into Kashmiri for the benefit of the people of the Valley. It was published in the Persian script by the British and Foreign Bible Society. At the time of his death in 1893 Ishvar Koul was engaged on the compilation of a Kashmiri-Sanskrit Dictionary. The work was taken up by Sir George Grierson. After spending many years over it he finally prepared a Kashmiri-English Dictionary which was published in 1932 by the Royal Asiatic Society in a big volume of 1252 pages under the title of "A Dictionary of the Kashmiri Language".

We now come to the modern era in the cultural regeneration and development in the Valley. The last three decades have witnessed not only the rise of a large number of poets and writers, the theme and content of the compositions and the writings has undergone a complete change.

It was in the time of Pratap Singh that Urdu replaced Persian as the court language of Kashmir. Consequently the educated and well-to-do classes gradually ceased to have any interest in the latter and devoted their energies to acquire scholarship in the new medium of communication in the official-

dom. The Western education imparted in the schools and colleges was inculcating revolutionary ideas of patriotism, equality, freedom and social justice. Urdu is not the mother tongue of the people of the Valley; it is Kashmiri. The more the ideas of independence spread among the people, the more demand there grew for literature that the masses could easily understand. Since 1920 or thereabout educationists, reformers, politicians, thinkers and religious leaders realized what the admirers of Kashmiri had known centuries before since the days of Shati Kantha and Lal Ded that no foreign language could be as effective a weapon as the mother tongue to fight ignorance and superstition or for dissemination of knowledge. It is therefore no wonder that Kashmiri poets have far excelled Urdu poets both in respect of numbers as well as popularity and fame.

The poets of the old order deeply influenced by the depressing environments in which they had their being mostly indulged in mysticism and were, generally speaking, pessimistic in their outlook. Their main theme was resignation and the submission to the will of the unseen, unknown and unknowable Supernatural Force. They accepted the unjust social order, the inequality of man and the tyranny of the despots as inevitable or worse still the fruit of the sins of the victims and the sufferers. If the poets took any interest in the mundane affairs it was in fauna and flora or the beauties of Nature than in the miserable existence of man. The humiliated, suppressed and trodden were consoled that the real world was reached after death and those who suffered here would enjoy there. The poetry was composed to drown the cries of misery and not to encourage rebellion against the iniquitous social order. The poets who flourished especially during the dismal period of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries are notable for this outlook. There were no doubt exceptions but those only proved the rule.

The spread of Western education and modern thought wrought a revolution in the old mentality. Even before the upheaval of 1931 some poets and writers had begun to express, moderately no doubt, the inner urge of the people. A new

spirit was being infused in the Kashmir poetry by the composition of pieces full of zest, vigour and force which brought the unbearable social, economic and political conditions to limelight. I distinctly remember how the audience was thrilled and visibly moved to their depths by the recitation of a poem satirising the fate of a petty clerk composed by Zind Koul in a public meeting of Kashmiri Pandits—a community of clerks—in March 1929 at Jammu.

Zind Koul is a graduate and a retired Government employee now in old age. For his simplicity of habits, nobility of thoughts and childlike nature he is respectad by people and is affectionately called "Masterjee" by his admirers because he was a teacher in the early part of his life. As already noted he has translated parts of the works of Parmanand into English. He has himself composed a number of small poems in Urdu, Persian and Kashmiri. Some of the best ones in Kashmiri have been published in a booklet form entitled "*Sumran*".

Zind Koul is a link between the old and the new. He hovers between mysticism and modern thought. But he is profound. In a reflective mood he says :

"Man would weep
He would not gulp down his tears
But what availed it him to shed his tears ?
What availed it him to drop blood from his eyes ?
What availed it him to beat his head against a rock ?
Knowing none heeds him,
What drives him on still to sue for help ?
What drives him on to shoot his darts at the void ?
What compulsion ! What helplessness !
Man-momently dying :
By hunger, cold and thirst oppressed,
By disease distressed, by worry harassed.
By fear and want and woe subdued
These sorrows O'er, by a hundred desires beguiled,
His unsteady mind, nor finding rest in anything here,
Still craves for a something, though unknown,
The God not seen by him, nor known by him,
He yet would find as something lost, which he possessed before
Like one who wakes with a memory dim

Of the taste of wine he had in a dream.
What misery between want and desire! "

Another poet of the transition period is Daya Ram Ganju. He does not indulge in mysticism nor is he a pessimist. His theme is didactic. In his published work *Gar Vez Mal* he has taken pains to instruct sisters and daughters regarding household affairs, cleanliness and good manners. He has also composed devotional poems. He sings :

"Away from thee I wait and wane
Like the westering moon ;
Away from thee I stumble and grope
In the dark like the blind

* * * *

"I have turned pale as *arni* rose
My youth and charms are fled
"I long to come home to thee."

Daya Ram Ganju belongs to the class of purists in language. He in insistent that Kashmiri should preserve its original chastity ; he depricates importation of foreign words. His *Gar Vez Mal* is written in simple and pure Kashmiri.

One more poet who was known before 1931 is Nand Lal Koul or Nanna. He is also a play-wright. His published works are *Satach Kahwat, Ramun Raj, Prahlad Bhagat* and *Daya Lol.*

The most reputed and the best known of the modern poets of the Valley is Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor. He was born in a middle class family of Pirs at the village Matrigam in 1888 A. C. After receiving education in Persian and Arabic in a *maktab* young Ghulam Ahmad travelled outside Kashmir for some time where he came in touch with scholars and poets and the desire to compose was aroused in him. On return to homeland in 1907 he was employed as a *patwari*. He first tried to compose verses in Urdu but this brought him neither peace of mind nor fulfilment of ambition. He could neither express himself fully nor appropriately. Besides he could also not spread his ideas among the illiterate masses whose liberation was the passion of his life. He turned towards Kashmiri deriving inspiration from Rasul Mir and other great poets of earlier times.

Mahjur composed many pieces during the twenties and

had already made a name in the world of Kashmir literature when the great change of 1931 shook the State. But his ideas were confined and he mostly composed love lyrics, *ghazals* or devotional poems. Being musical and dealing with the emotions and sentiments of the ordinary people these became popular. In a few years the countryside echoed and reachoed with Mahjur's lyrics. It so happened that soon after the elemental upsurge some of his ballads were brought to the notice of Poet Tagore who spoke about them in appreciative terms. This proved to be the beginning of Mahjur's emergence into fame as a national poet of the Valley. It speaks highly of Mahjur's intelligence that when the revolution came he rose equal to the occasion and imbibing the spirit of the times became the champion of the cause of freedom. Encouraged by the praise of Tagore and others he burst forth into composing moving songs full of nationalistic spirit and ideas about human freedom, brotherhood of man, unity of Hindus and Muslims, respect for manual labour, pride for ancient culture and past achievements of Kashmiris and love of mankind. His lyrics also could not remain uninfluenced by the new revolutionary and patriotic fervour. In his poem "Our Country is a Garden" he rises to the heights of eloquence. It is so charming and musical :

"The *Bulbul* sings to the flower— :
'our country is a garden'
In this our lovely garden
Flowers bloom and bloom
Wafting abroad their fragrance
See the flush of bloom
In orchards, woods and glades
The *Bulbul* gazes fondly
And has his thrill of joy...
The spring has filled with symphony
Fountains and brooks and hill-streams,
Rills and water-falls.
To field, hills and open woods,
To hollows, glens and meads—
What glow imparts the bloom !...
The *Bulbul* dotes on roses
On narcissus the bee,
Drunk with the joy of his native land

Is the Kashmiri.
Our native land O Mahjur,
Is verily a lovely garden.
We must love it dearly.
We all must love it dearly."

Mahjur is the votary of Hindu-Muslim unity. He detests communalism. He repeatedly lays emphasis on religious harmony and human love. To him this is one of the cardinal principles of Kashmir culture:

"Who is the friend and who the foe of your (native land)?
Let you among yourselves thoughfully make out.
The kind and stock of all Kashmiris is one;
Let you mix milk and sugar once again.
Hindus will keep the helm and Muslims ply the oars;
Let you together row (ashore) the boat of this country."

Mahjur is some times philosophical and gets his ideas by keen observation of natural phenomenon. In his beautiful little poem "The Lightning" he asks:

"What wise men revealed to you the mystry of existence,
That this world is not the proper abode for the beautiful.
Is that, why, O charming creature,
You kept yourself back?

In August 1939 Mahjur composed an inspiring poem for the Special Responsible Government Number of *The Hamdard*. It was melodious, emotional and deeply moving. It was a message to his countrymen which taught them to abandon conventional methods and traditional ways for the achievement of freedom which could be attained only through "earthquakes, gales, thunders and storms" Mahjur exhorted:

"Arise, O gardener
Let there be a glory in the garden
Once again!
Let roses bloom again!
Let *bulbuls* sing of their love again!
The garden in ruins,
The dew in tears.
The roses in tattered leaf—
Let roses and *bulbuls* be kindled anew with life.
The wailings avail thee not, O *bulbul*,
Who will set thee free?
Thy salvation thou has to work
With thine own hands alone

Birds of the garden are full of song
But each one strikes his own note
Harmonise their diverse notes, O God, into one rousing song.
If thou wouldst rouse this habitat of roses
Leave toying with kettle-drums
Let there be thunder-storm and tempest yes, an earthquake"

Mahjur had to face serious trouble at the hands of the Authority for composing the poem but finally he escaped unmolested. The song however became very popular, and was adopted by the National Conferenceas a national anthem which is recited in all its meetings to this day.

Mahjur believed that a day would come when his motherland would be free and the people would live happy, contented and prosperous lives. When

"The dreary wastes shall no more lie desolate,
A new world shall settle therein
The deserts shall change into a flower-garden
The thorny poisonous bush (*arakhal*) shall get a graft of the pine;
The willow shall get the durability of the sandal-wood
The hills shall give birth to precious stones
The ranges of the mountains shall yield gold
Divers shall detect rubies in Dal
Pearls shall emerge out of the Wular lake."

Mahjur entertains no doubts about the future of Kashmir and the triumph of democracy. He warns the exploiters of the coming revolution when the oppressed and the victimised will rise in rebellion. He tells them:

"Enjoy the opulence for a day or two (more),
Soon thou shall have to face the flood (of democracy)
People will then reside in the drawing rooms.
Listen, therefore, to the (voice of) reality;
Be in tune with the (changing) time."

Addressing himself about the great future of motherland the poet says:

"Winter will vanish, snow will melt away, spring will come again;
Mahjur, be ready with thy symphony of love!
Flowers will bloom of their own accord.
Let thee just become an apparent cause."

Mahjur's works have been published under two titles (1) *Payam-i-Mahjur* (in six parts) and *Kalam-i-Mahjur* (in nine

parts). There is hardly any home in the Valley where his songs are not sung. He is equally popular among Hindus and Muslims, young and old, men and women. More than a lakh copies of his booklets have been sold and the demand is still there. Kashmir poetry reached a high water-mark in the lyrics of Mahjur. His style is simple, understandable and direct. His technique of metre and rhyme is perfect. He is musical and emotional and he has enriched the language by beautiful similies and metaphors.

But Mahjur suffers from all the disabilities of Indian Nationalism. He is a revivalist, and always looks back to the mythical golden age in ancient times for inspiration. He is conservative and contradictory. He could not fully grasp the implications of modern secularism. He could not totally divest himself of the outworn and antiquated ideas of the feudal times. Though simple and sweet Mahjur is shallow and superficial. On the one hand he taught self-reliance and on the other complete dependence on the supernatural powers and unseen forces. At times when the internal contradictions of nationalism faced him he felt confused but did not possess the courage to take a step further and grow with the Freedom Movement. In a way he also served as a link between the past that was and the future that will be.

Mahjur was held in high esteem by the Nationalists, and he too was their great admirer. But in the political crisis of October 1947 the poet wavered. He had consistently supported the Nationalists but was now stunned to find where the leadership had brought Kashmir. He composed an exciting poem beginning with the words "though I would like to sacrifice my life and body for India yet my heart is in Pakistan". It was typical of the mental confusion through which he passed. But in the eyes of the Nationalists even this much was a crime. He was arrested and put behind bars for many days. On arriving at an understanding with the tyrants the noble poet secured release. Never again did he utter a word on the dispute of accession though he could not entirely suppress himself about the misbehaviour of the Nationalists. Mahjur died in June 1952

at the age of sixty-four when a public mourning was observed throughout the Valley. The Kashmir Government declared the day of his death as a public holiday and gave him an official burial beside the grave of Habba Khatun.

The greatest poet of modern Kashmir is Abdul Ahad Dar Azad. He deserves to be called a revolutionary and a master of cultural renaissance. He was born at the village Rangar in the Badgam tehsil in 1902. His father Sultan Darvesh was known for his love of literature and god-fearing nature. Abdul Ahad received education in Persian and Arabic at home. He studied the Holy Quran and some Persian classics for a number of years. It was in his late teens that he learnt Urdu by his own efforts. Like Mahjur he never had the good fortune to learn English and come in touch with modern ideas through the medium of this language. He realised this deficiency and should certainly have made it good had not cruel death snatched him away at an early age.

While as a boy Abdul Ahad was in the habit of reciting poems of Hafiz and Rumi along with his father. This appears to have aroused a desire in him to compose poetry himself. Explaining the immediate cause of his start as a poet, he told me : "One day I was sitting in my home absorbed in contemplation. Just at that moment a *bulbul* came flying and perched precariously on a tiny branch of a tree outside in the compound. The branch gave way falling down along with the bird. I don't know how or why this incident instantaneously inspired me and a few verses flowed from my mind". I very much regret that I have forgotten the verses which he chanted after narrating the incident.

Abdul Ahad started his life in imitation of his virtuous father as a pious, devoted and god-fearing Muslim. His love for versification became known and Sultan Darvesh introduced him to the study of ancient poets like Habba Khatun, Rasul Mir and Maqbul Shah. The boy was gifted with a musical throat and he was pressed by the village elders to sing Kashmiri songs.

Having studied Urdu and Persian well, Abdul Ahad was

employed in the Education Department as a teacher in a village primary school. Though in this position he had to fight against dire poverty till the end of his life, yet he spent most of his leisure in composing and writing. His first *takhalus* (pen name) was *Ahad* which he soon changed into *Janbaz.*

Abdul Ahad was married to a village girl and had one son aged four. The child fell seriously ill while the father was posted at Tral, another village quite distant from Rangar. Abdul Ahad could not secure permission to visit his ailing son. He therefore spent whole nights keeping vigil at the local shrine of Shah Hamadan praying for his recovery. But the son died and the poet was rudely shocked. He thought deeply over the incident and was forced to revise his philosophy of life. He became a skeptic and a rationalist and though he did not confess it even to himself he was on way to agnosticism. From *Janbaz* he became *Azad.* The new spirit was reflected in the poetry that Abdul Ahad composed thereafter. But the highest stage was yet to be achieved. This he did in 1942 when he came in touch with the democratic movement for the complete freedom of Kashmir led by the Kashmir Socialists. This association afforded him the chance to study the most modern literature and the trends in the contemporary philosophy and progressive thought. All his latent capacities were unfolded. Being a revolutionary at heart and a born profound thinker, he freed himself of all dogmas, superstitions and prejudices. He questioned the need of religion, the infallibility of scriptures and the existence of God. He raised the banner of revolt against the extant social order. He declared that the sovereignty of man was supreme and there was no other power, seen or unseen, over him which could command his allegiance.

The poetry of Abdul Ahad can be divided into three parts. In the beginning he composed love lyrics and devotional songs. In these poems the influence of Urdu and Persian poets is clear. In 1936 he met Mahjur and was fascinated by his verses on Nature. Getting inspiration from these he produced poems describing Nature as a philosopher. This was the second period. The last and the best phase came when he became a materialist, an

conoclast, a rebel and the standard-bearer of social revolution and complete freedom of Kashmir. But whether as a lyric, a lover of Nature or a revolutionary, Azad is profound, subtle and deep. His poetry is dry when compared with that of Mahjur. But every word that he has written has meaning. Speaking about the object of life Azad said:

"To become free, to end tyranny and to abolish superstition
This is my cherished dream, this my desire and this slogan."

Reviewing the Freedom Movement from ancient ages to the present days and the part played by the patriots including himself in it, Azad observes:

"I have accepted the burden of ages on my head;
The angels of the heavens have shuddered at my doggedness,
I have chewed steel, I have braved fire;
I have sipped the blood of my heart;
But this my head has not, till this day,
Bent low before anyone else but thee."

While Mahjur was moving like a shuttle cock between Religious Humanism and Modernism, Azad courageously preached Scientific Humanism. He denounced communal bigotry and religious fanaticism in vehement terms. In his *Shama* (Candle) the poet asks and then himself answers:

"In this vast expanse of oneness,
Who is my kin, and who a stranger to me?
A Musalman is to me as good as a Hindu;
My *deen* is fraternity, my *dharma* is oneness,
My light is meant for one and all...

But Azad is no admirer of nationalism. He calls it "jugglery" and "cause of enmity" between man and man. He brackets nationalism and communalism together. In his opinion neither the one nor the other can liberate mankind.

Azad is confident that he is free spiritually as well as intellectually, but he is anxious that his countrymen may also share this freedom with him. *Deen* and *kufur* are childish notions and should be discarded. He says:

"Pray announce to all the Kashmiris the secrets thou
has confided to Azad,
After casting away childish frivolities of *kufur and deen*.
The light from the candle is for all, Hindus and Musalmans.

In his famous poem of seventy-three verses entitled *Shikwa-i-Iblis* (Complaint of Satan) Azad has put his views about religion in the mouth of Satan. It is a challenge and a frank denial of the conception of God. "I know only blind people believe in your existence," emphatically states Satan. "Who has seen me with his eyes? Who knows me? You and I both are mere ideas, talk, moonshine". The poem created a furore among the orthodox classes. There was a talk of issuing a *futwa* against the poet and declaring him an apostate. Even Mahjur, Arif and some other poets persuaded him to retrace his steps and come on the old conventional path. I know how furious he felt. But in his characteristic calm, dignified, unperturbed and thoughtful manner he answered :

"Deendar che chhui deen panun chhum me panun deen
Iman Khuda chon ta Insan muda myon !
Mandran mashidan dharmsalan chon Khuda khush
Lolas ta kuniras dardidils razi khuda myon !

(O, faithful you have your own *deen* and I have mine : Your sacred object is God and my ideal is Man. Your God is pleased by building temples mosques and *dharmshalas* ; my beloved feels delighted in unity, affection, and sympathy)".

The best poem that Azad composed three years before his death is the "Song of the River". It was his message to the Urdu edition of *The Weekly Vitasta* which Prem Nath Bazaz started during summer 1945. Very little like it has been composed in Kashmiri. In choice of words it is comparable to Grey's Elegy. It contains the essence of philosophy of life that Azad taught. In its imagery, depth of thought, force of language clarity of ideas, and height of imagination, it is unrivalled in, Kashmiri literature. The rhythmic movement of the waters is symbloc of call for action and revolt against the iniquitous social order. The River sings :

"I corrode away the heart of hills,
Such is the momentum of my flow !
I bathe the (tender) frames of the sweet
Such is the softness of my ways !
"My curves and twists are full of straightforward love
I get the music of love in travels and wandering
Amidst the flowers and the nightingales

I play upon the sweet *santoor* !
Among the rocks—the stony hearts—
I beat the drum of upheaval !

Again, referring to social injustice the River says :

"When I witness ups and downs, banks and demarcations,
I lose my temper
I seek oneness and equality ; for that
I run and foam and fret !
Hence is it that, water though I am,
I have fallen on the burning coals of the mulbery-woods".

Azad was a patriot *par excellence* and a passionate lover of Kashmir. "Though I know rivers of milk flow in heaven but my mind refuses to forget Sind, Ranbiara, Vitsata, Verinag, Ganga and Jumna, the rivers and springs of my motherland", he declares. Throughout his poetry the poet weeps tears of blood over the enslavement of Kashmir and its people. But he believes that man is more a prisoner of his own superstitions, ignorance and prejudices than of any physical or temporal power. "O man", Azad reflectively states, "you have to travel over the path of life yourself ; yet how many thorns like fate, heaven, hell and Providence, you have sown in it". But he is confident that one day his countrymen will achieve the freedom of his conception. Even in the womb of slavery will be born the seeds of emancipation. In a charming little poem after describing the baneful effects of slavery Azad concludes : "But at the fulness of time slavery proves its own annihilator. Spiritually liberated men holding independent and revolutionary views are born who become the cause of sinking of the boat of bondage".

Azad's poetry is profound and prophetic but dry. With the passage of time it is becoming increasingly popluar in the intellectual and the literary classes in the Valley.

Azad exclusively contributed his poems and writings to the columns of *The Hamdard*. Some of his poems have been published in booklet form entitled *Sangarmala* in five parts. He was a literary critic and a research scholar too. He devoted many years collecting the published and unpublished works of all the known poets of Kashmiri language and edited them giving his own critical views about each. I have cursorily gone

through the manuscript. It is a monumental work of immense importance to the cultural development of Kashmir; it is the history of Kashmiri literature. It was one of the desires of Azad to get it published but financial difficulty stood in his way and the ambition remained unrealised in his life-time. When published it will show what a great scholar he was.

Soon after the Nationalists came to power in October, 1947, an organisation known as Cultural Front was founded in Srinagar under official patronage by the supporters of the regime. Azad was invited to be its member. He declined. Attempts were made to coerce him through the authorities of the Education Department. This was the time when all the Socialists and most of the poet's admirers were behind the bars because of their difference in views with the Nationalists on the accession issue. Most probably due to the fear that he might be forced to act contrary to dictates of his conscience he fell seriously ill and was removed to a hospital where he was successfully operated upon. But the criminal negligence of the hospital attendants and the utter indifference of the Nationalist Government ended this precious life. Azad, the singer of Renaissance, a great thinker of modern Kashmir and the Poet of Humanism died on the morning of 5th April 1948 in the general ward of the Hari Singh Hospital in Srinagar like an orphan, unwept, unhonoured and unsung. The dead body was taken away by his younger brother to Rangar and buried in the family graveyard in the presence of a few admirers who happened to be outside prison.

Among other poets who have attained fame during recent years notable ones are Satar Gujri *Aasi*, Pitambar Nath Dhar *Faani*, Ghulam Ahmad *Naz*, *Hairat* Pandani, Ghulam Hassan Beg *Arif*, Dina Nath *Nadim*, Ama Khoja and *Dilsoz*.

Satar Gujri writing under the pen name of *Aasi* belonged to the milkman class. He started his life as a labourer and a load-carrier. In the beginning he composed Persian *ghazals* but influenced by the Freedom Movement he turned towards Kashmiri. He composed several poems and songs expressing the urge of the people for liberation. His *Siyasi Qaidi* or the

Mazoor or the "Labourer" *Naujawanun se Khitab* or an "Address to Youth" are popular poems. *Aasi* was known as *Mazoor Shair* or the "Labour Poet". He was in imprisonment for three months in 1942 for his radical views in politics. He died in 1951.

Pitambar Nath Dhar *Faani* is another poet of progressive views. He is a graduate and a teacher by profession. His poems reflect a burning desire for the freedom of Kashmir. He wants to destroy the antiquated social, political and economic order. He is a Socialist and denies the existence of any supernatural force. A materialist by faith and conviction, he thinks that unless the masses of the Valley are liberated spiritually and culturally the attainment of complete freedom is not possible. Like Azad he likes neither communalism nor nationalism, which both are "chains to bind humanity." But ideologically ultra-radical, in practice, to the disappointment of his admirers, *Faani* falters. At the time of crisis he is involved in confusion. He was arrested in 1951 for holding views critical of the Nationalist Government and kept in detention for some months.

A selection of *Faani's* poems has been published in three booklets *Poshi Dalya* or "Bouquet of Flowers", "*Posh Bagh* or "Flower Garden" and *Tarana-i-Zindgi* or the "Song of Life".

Ghulam Ahmad Rathar *Naz* is an intelligent youngman of the village Swapat. He is a graduate and now in London studying law. He is religious-minded and author of *Meraj Nama*. He cherishes the desire to see the toiling peasants freed from enslavement. For some time he worked as the general secretary of the Kisan Conference.

Naz is hovering between communalism and socialism. He is unsteady and has not been able to decide finally which path to adopt. He has already come to grief due to his unsettled mind.

Ghulam Hassan Beg *Arif* is a mystic poet who tries to become modern. He is an M. Sc., and Director of the Sericulture Department. There is humour in his writings though it is not subtle. He has composed a good many qua-

trains in imitation of *Azad*. His songs have a patriotic tinge and are sometimes full of vigour. He says :

"I come dashing along
To find my haven of peace
(While I am young and strong)
(While I am young and strong)
For youth will not endure
I rush forth from my source,
My flow doth not abate,
I feel a zest for life,
Life ever doth urge me on."

Arif's poetry is more laboured than spontaneous. He often uses words because he can not help it.

Hairat Pandani is an accomplished poet but his poetry is dominated by Persian words and idioms. He is the author of *Raina-va-Zeba.*

Dina Nath *Nadim*, a graduate and teacher by profession, is a budding poet of communist views. He started as an Urdu poet but turned to Kashmiri in 1944. He is a regular contributor to *Kwang Posh* or "the Saffron Flower", a monthly journal run by Communists in Kashmir.

Ahmad Ullah Sopori known as "Ama Khoji" is a lyricist. Being not well read, his poems, though sweet and popular among the village folk, suffer from rhythmical and metrical defects as is the case with many of the illiterate poets. He is a good singer and a musician. He is the author of *Risala-i-Dil, Ishqa Bagh, Kalam-i-Ulfat. Kalam-i-Ama Khoji, Zahoor-i-Gulshan* and *Saroor-i-Ishaq*, He is now in Azad Kashmir.

Dilsoz, a passionate and ebullient dramatist-poet died in the prime of his life leaving behind his poetical works known as *Bahar-i-Madani, Shirin Farhad* (a drama),*Laila Majnoon, Kalam-i-Dilsoz, Khayal-i-Dilsoz, Tarana-i-Dilsoz, Tarana-i-Gulistan-i-Kashmir* and another drama *Mustafa Kamal Pasha.*

Shams Faqir, Samad Mir, Ahad Zargar, Rahman Dar, Rahman Panjabi, Rahim Sahib Sopori, Naeema Sahib and Ahmad Batwari belong to the old order and compose religious verses and poems. Each of them has published his works in book form. They are popular among the backward Muslim masses

of the Valley. Shams Faqir is the author of *Biaz-i-Shams Faqir* in two parts. Samad Mir has published his own *kalam* in six parts and a version of *Akanandun* in two parts. Ahad Zargar is the author of *Kalam-i-Zargar* in ten parts, *Akanandun Kalan, Gul-o-Sanobar* and *Maulvi Nama.*

Ashaq is a poet like Haqqani. His poems in praise of the prophet are sweet and stirring.

Ghulam Ahmad *Fazil* is a lyricist who has composed some melodious songs. He is the author of *Nagma-i-Zar* and *Pahil Koor-va-Kral Koor.* Man Joo Suri has composed the epic Ramayana in Kashmiri verse.

Mention may also be made of Abdur Rehman *Rahi,* Nand Lal Ambardar, *Roshan, Majboor,* Amin *Kamil, Shana Saz, Sayir, Masroor* Kulgami, Sudamaji *Mussavir,* Ghulam Ahmad *Mushtaq,* Tara Chand *Bismil,* Prem Nath *Premi,* Abdul Ahad *Barq* and Shamboo Nath *Yasman* who are also composing verses and taking interest in the cultural regeneration of Kashmir.

In 1932 freedom of Press was achieved by the people of Kashmir and forthwith newspapers and periodicals were started by persons endowed with the gift of writing. The first to appear in the Valley was *The Daily Vitasta* which was issued by the end of September, 1932. More than a hundred journals in Urdu mostly weeklies came to life during the past twenty-one years. Many of them lived only for a few months. The leading ones guiding public opinion and which were in existence on the eve of partition were *The Daily Hamdard,* mouthpiece of the Socialists, *The Daily Martand,* the official organ of the Kashmiri Pandits Conference, *The Daily Khidmat,* official organ of the National Conference, *The Weekly Millat* of the Muslim Conference and *The Weekly Islah* of the Ahmadis. *The Kashmir Times* was a standard weekly in English language holding independent views but critical of the doings of the Nationalists. All these journals were published from Srinagar. Among the prominent journalists mention may be made of Mir Abdul Aziz, Janki Nath Zutshi, Kashyap Bandhu, Maulvi Mohammed Sayid, Nand Lal Wattal, Jagan Nath Sathu, Prem

Nath Kanna, Ghulam Ahmad Kashfi, Sham Lal Sadhu and Gwash Lal Koul.

Attempts were made to start journals in Hindi and Kashmiri languages but they did not meet with success. Certain leading journals, however, have been reserving a few pages in their weekly editions for the publication of poems in Kashmiri.

Some Kashmiris have flourished as poets and story writers in Urdu. Of the former Khushi Ahmad *Nazir*, Mohi-ud-Din *Qamar*, Master Zind Koul, Nand Lal *Talib*, Kamal-ud-Din *Shaida*, Dina Nath Chikan *Mast*, *Shahzor* Kashmiri, Ghulam Ahmad *Nazuki*, Hussain Ullah Ansari *Tanha*, Jia Lal *Barq*, Ghulam Ahmad *Fazil*, Dina Nath *Dilgir*, Dina Nath *Nadim*, Prem Nath *Masroor*, Dina Nath Warikoo *Shahid* and Nand Lal *Begarz* deserve mention. Though a good number of their poems have appeared in different journals and magazines from time to time yet with the exception of Khushi Ahmad *Nazir* and Nand Lal Koul *Talib* none of them has got any published *Dewan* of his poems. *Nazir* is the author of *Nagmai Firdos* and *Talib* the author of *Rushat-ul-Takhayyal* which he got printed when he was young.

Among the Urdu writers of Kashmir Prem Nath *Pardesi*, Prithivi Nath *Pushp* (also a Hindi writer), Pitambar Nath Dhar *Faani*, Gangadhar Bhat *Dehati*, Nand Lal *Begarz*, Vir Vishesh-war, Abdur Rahman *Rahi* and Som Nath Zutshi, are noteworthy Pardesi is a remarkable writer of short stories in which he graphically depicts the social life of the Valley focussing attention on its evils. His stories have been published in three volumes entitled *Sham-o-Sahar*, *Kichar-ke-Devata* and *Chowrangi*.

Anand Koul Bamzai, once President of the Srinagar Municipality, was the first Kashmiri to earn the honour of writing a book in English. He is the author of *The Kashmiri Pandit*, *Jammu and Kashmir State* (1925) and several learned and thoughtful articles on such cultural subjects as *Archaeological Remains*, *Kashmir History* and *Life of Lalla and Nund Rishi*. Other books written in English are the *Building of Jammu and Kashmir State* by Arjun Nath Sapru (1931), *Economics of food Grains in Kashmir* by Jia Lal Koul Jalali (1931), *Ancient Monuments of*

Kashmir by Ram Chandra Kak (1933), *Kashmir* and *Eden of the East* by Som Nath Dhar *Kashmir Speaks* by Som Nath Tikku and *Birds of Kashmir* by Sansar Chand Koul (1945). Professor Jia Lal Koul has selected and ably translated into English lyrics from old and modern poets of Kashmiri language. These are published in a book entitled *Kashmir lyrics* (1946).

In ancient and medieval times Kashmir had become the home of music, dancing, painting and other fine arts. The scenic beauties of the Valley afforded the inspiration and when the kings were patrons of culture artists came from far off countries and enriched the Valley with new additions in the shape of their own gifts. From eighth to sixteenth century there was considerable advance in the art of music. Many authoritative treatises were written on the subject. All Muslim rulers were fond of dancing as well as music, the Mughal no less than the Shah Miri and Chak Sultans. But all the arts of peace received a set-back during the dismal years of tyranny. Suppressed and terror-stricken people cannot be good artists or art-lovers. We do not therefore hear of any production of works on music or painting during the last two centuries. No singer, no musician, no painter worthy of note has flourished in the Valley in this dark period of our history. But the traditions could not be obliterated altogether. True, deprived of the royal patronage, the arts fell mostly into unworthy hands but they did not go out of existence.

Kashmir Music includes classical and folk music as well as the vocal and instrumental. The classical music is usually called *Soofiana Kalam* or the Mystical Poetry. The wording and the text of this music is usually in Persian occasionally in Kashmiri also. The *Tal* (Rhythm) and *Bol* (words) synchronise well with the metre and the verse. Kashmiri musicians do not sing in solo. They do so in chorus to the accompaniment of such instruments as *Saz*, *Santoor*, *Sitar*, *Rabab* and *Dhukra* or *Dholak*. Sometimes the vocalists and the instrumentalists are the same but generally they are different. The man at *Dhukra* keeps the *tal* or the rhythm. Kashmir music is neither wholly Indian nor wholly Persian. It derives its inspiration from both.

Its *tal* and *bol* are different from Indian *tal* and *bol*. The basis of its melody is the *muqam* a counterpart of the Indian *Raga*. The musician is more or less free to invent and compose any *muqam*. Like the Indian *Raga*, the *muqams* also have their particular hours of day and night.

Throughout the medieval times Kashmiri masters of music had improved upon what they learnt from the Indians and the Persians. It has already been mentioned that Habba Khatun invented the *Rast Rag*. Several other inventions were also made though they are of lesser importance.

The most popular and the most widely known music of Kashmir today is the *Chhakri*, a kind of folk music and folk dance combined. It is sung in chorus and is accompanied by an orchestra. Often a small handsome boy called *bacha*, gaily dressed in elegant costume, dances to the tune of the music. While *Soofiana Kalam* is the music of the leisured and the learned classes, the *Chhakri* is the music of the masses. It is sung on festivals, marriages and at public gatherings. There are scores of well known *Chhakri* parties led by popular singers all over the Valley which delight the people by singing the love-lyrics and occasionally national songs. Generally the *Chhakri* sings of beauties of nature, the attractions of the flower-bedecked gardens, the blossoms, the spring, the brooks, the forests and also the hopes and disappointments of love and separation.

The lovers of music in Kashmir have founded an association called the Sangeet Sabha which devotes its energies to the spread of knowledge about classical Indian Music among the people in the Valley.

Decader ago there were scores of singing and dancing girls in Srinagar and well-to-do people used to engage them on occasions of festivals and marriages. With the fall in cultural standards and the growth of vulgar tastes, women have ceased to get into this profession. Attempts have started to revive the institution by imparting scientific education in dancing to boys and girls.

Another class of people who have preserved the cultural

traditions of old Kashmir are called *Bhands*. They live in a village Vahthore ten miles to the south of Srinagar. They are the wandering ministrels. They sing, dance and act on rustic stages. For centuries this devoted band of men have provided the only kind of cultural entertainment that the tyrannised people of the Valley could enjoy. The *Bhands* are the descendants of those gifted bards and artists of ancient Kashmir who once adorned the courts of great rulers and generous nobles with distinction. Through dark ages they have come to be looked upon as no batter than beggars. At the harvest time they roam from village to village amusing the peasants with their dances songs and mimicry. The entertainment team usually consists of some instrument players, drummers, clowns and one or two boys dressed in female attire. In their plays they depict the heroic battles of kings, the court intrigues, the legends of the land, the customs of different classes, the orthodoxy of Brahmins, the *zulum* of the petty officials and many incidents associated with the past glory of Kashmir. The peasants of the Valley are delighted by these entertainments and generously reward the *Bhands*.

The Dogra rulers did not take any interest whatsoever in the declining arts of music and dancing in the Valley. With the birth of the cultural renaissance movement, however, educated classes have begun to turn their attention towards them.

In 1917 Maharaja Pratap Singh established a Technical Institute at Srinagar in which training was imparted to students in various arts such as painting, engineering, smithy, wicker-work, sculpture and carpentry. For many years the institute worked splendidly and some artists though not of a high standard came out of it. But subsequently for reasons best known to the authorities the institute was starved for want of financial assistance. It remained in a miserable condition for a period when one class after another was closed down. Finally the doors of the institute itself were shut under the present regime.

None among the modern painters of Kashmir can be called master of the art, but it is fair to mention the names of

Sat Lal Kharoo, Shiv Ji Raina, Maheshwar Nath Koul, Dina Nath Wali, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, R.C. Wantoo, Triloke Koul, Ghulam Rasul Santosh, S. N. Butt, P. N. Kachru, and Mohan Lal Raina who have imbibed the spirit of the new age and are making great efforts to raise the name of Kashmir in the cultural world.

Dina Nath Wali impresses one with sensitive handling and depth of feeling, two outstanding merits of his works. He has a huge collection of paintings and many of his landscapes are brilliantly drawn. For having contributed two sketches to the Special Responsible Government Number of *The Hamdard* in August 1938 Wali had to face trouble. One of the sketches depicted a horrible scene in which the hideous looking alien despotic Government was trampling upon the teeming, toiling millions of Kashmir. The artist was let off with a warning by the Maharaja's Government. Never again did Wali draw any sketches or paintings of political significance.

Triloke Koul is a graduate who worked as an insurance agent, travelling salesman and sub-editor before he applied himself to the art of painting in 1946. Today he is recognised as an artist of promise with an impressive number of paintings in water colour and oil besides a few wood-cuts to his credit. Several of his paintings have appeared in reputable journals like *The Times of India*. Recently an American Magazine *The Atlantic* published eight selected paintings by Indian artists. One of these was by Triloke Koul.

Wali, Butt, Kachru, Santosh and Koul have held exhibitions of their paintings in big cities of India and achieved fame outside the boundaries of their homeland.

To revive the painting traditions of Kasmir and to develop the taste for this art among the people of the Valley the members of the painting profession have started an organisation. It is called the Progressive Artists Association.

If the arts of painting, dancing and music did not receive any encouragement during the last two centuries nor did the architecture show any signs of revival. Ata Mohammed Khan, the builder of the fort at the summit of Hari Parbat, was the

only Pathan Governor who had some cultural tastes. He constructed some beautiful gardens in and around the city.

The Dogras renovated the Mughal gardens and repaired some ancient monuments. Maharajas Ranbir Singh and Pratap Singh built the temples of Raghunath, Shiva and Gadhadhar. They are all simple in design with shikhras and kalash. They are more in imitation of the modern temples of India than a continuation of the traditions of viharas and temples of ancient Kashmir.

Pratap Singh built his palaces at Shergarhi on the banks of Vitasta. They are neither modern nor medieval. From the opposite bank of the river some buildings look rather imposing. At present these palaces house the Government Secretariate.

With all his faults Hari Singh has cultivated a taste for buildings of simple but charming design in vogue in modern European cities. The palaces that he built adjacent to Parimahal between Shankaracharia Hill and the Chashma Shahi Garden is witness to it. The whole vast area with its spacious lawns, flower-bedecked gardens rising slope after slope, on the background of a high mountain, the beautiful Dal in the front, is a lovely spot. During nights when the palaces are illuminated with brilliant electric lights the spot viewed from a distance looks like a place inhabited by fairies. This is perhaps the only achievement to the credit of Hari Singh during his rule of more than twenty-seven years. But again the palaces are wholly modern and are in no way connected with the architectural traditions of Kashmir.

In the days of Hari Singh the old cantilever bridges over the Vitasta were demolished and in their place new strong and solid ones were erected with steel girders and concrete so that heavy wheeled traffic could safely move over them. Maharaja Hari Singh got a long fine boulevard constructed from Dalgate to Gagribal and beyond on the east bank of the Dal. It has lent a special charm to the beautiful lake and the boulevard is considered the best place in Srinagar for a walk or a drive. Hari Singh had intended to get it constructed all round the lake but political conditions stood in

the way of the realisation of his desire. Had he completed the work it would surely have been an achievement of importance. Nevertheless for what little he has done the Maharaja deserves credit.

Unless and until the awakened Kashmir thoroughly undergoes an intellectual renaissance there is no hope for art and architecture to revive in the Valley. For the present those gifted with creative powers are groping in the dark, some deriving inspiration from this and others from that quarter. For the progress and prosperity of our motherland we have to benefit from the positive achievements of our forefathers and we have to take up from where they left. But before we can do so we must adapt ourselves to the modern scientific and rationalistic age. That is the greatest problem facing us today.

BOOK SECOND

AFTER THE PARTITION

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

NATIONALISTS COME TO POWER

SIX years ago when the subcontinent of India achieved independence and the Dominion of Pakistan was born, a revolutionary situation had arisen in Kashmir as in all other native states. In the absence of the British bayonets which would be no more available to keep him on his throne the Dogra Maharaja was compelled by the realities of his position either to secure the confidence and goodwill of the people who are predominantly Muslim or seek some other prop to maintain his undeserved power and to continue his unwanted rule. Evidently the Maharaja found himself in a tight corner. He could obtain the willing co-operation of the people only if he were prepared to wholly relinquish his autocratic authority, transfer power to the genuine representatives of the people and agree to behave like a constitutional prince. It was manifest that if he resisted in any manner, revolution would make a clean sweep of him and he would not only lose his throne but he would also have to leave the country for good. For, the Maharaja is not only an autocrat ; being a non-Kashmiri, he is in the Kashmir Valley an alien too. Having the tradition of not parting with an iota of power without making people suffer immensely, it was clear that the Maharaja would not even think of voluntarily transferring authority to them. To hand over power to the people, whom, being overwhelmingly Muslim, the Maharaja distrusted and despised, was extremely repugnant to him. So at a very great obvious risk he took recourse to the alternative. He sought support from other quarters. He approached the Congress leaders at Delhi who were heir designate to rulership of India. Nehru and others were waiting for this opportunity to intervene in the State affairs. So no time was lost and post-haste Mahatma Gandhi visited Kashmir in the beginning of

August 1947 to strike a deal with the Maharaja. The apostle of truth announced before departure from Delhi that his tour was absolutely non-political and undertaken simply as a formality to redeem a thirty-year old promise made to late Maharaja Pratap Singh at the Kumbh Mela in 1919. But soon after the Mahatma's return the real nature of the tour became evident. The Congress leaders were ready to help the Maharaja but on two conditions. First, Ram Chandra Kak, who was for his own reasons in favour of the State remaining independent, was to be replaced by a new Prime Minister acceptable to the Congress leaders and secondly the State was to accede to the Indian Union. It was impressed upon the Maharaja that he shall have also to enlist the sympathies of the Kashmir Nationalists.

Doubtless the Maharaja was in a fix and made frantic efforts to save his throne as well as his power. No section of the Kashmir Muslims, however, and none of the freedom loving non-Muslims were ready to help Hari Singh to achieve these selfish ends. Neither unexpectedly nor unnaturally, but significantly it was at this critical juncture in the annals of our Freedom Movement that Abdullah who had flamboyantly launched the fraudulent 'Quit Kashmir' agitation in May 1946 but had miserably failed in the adventure, volunteered to support the Maharaja in his anti-democratic and sinister move. While still behind the prison bars and some time before the Mahatma Gandhi came to strike the bargain with the Maharaja, Abdullah made suggestions through emissaries to the Maharaja assuring him that if the Nationalists were released and given some crumbs of personal power they were ready to serve the same Dogra ruler against the rising tide of popular discontent and upsurge whom in 1946 they had asked to quit the Valley. In a letter to a friend in Jammu which he managed to send from the Badrawah Sub Jail (a report about which was published in the Congress organ, *The Hindustan Times* of New Delhi, on June 7, 1947), Abdullah advised the Maharaja to at once accede to the Indian Union and not to remain independent as the leaders of the Muslim Conference wanted him to do. Abdullah having shown solicitude for the preservation of the Dogra throne

and having publicly committed himself to the support of the view of Kashmir's accession to India, all the Nationalist leaders and workers were pardoned for their disloyalty in having launched the 'Quit Kashmir' agitation. Kak was forced to resign and a septuagenarian Major General Janak Singh, a Dogra Rajput of the bluest blood, was provisionally installed as Prime Minister. When the old General assumed charge of the onerous office on 11th August, 1947, and came out in the Secretariate compound to grant *darshan* a number of Nationalist leaders, staunchest supporters of 'Quit Kashmir' slogan, showered flowers on his car and garlanded him. They also shouted loudly *Janak Singh Zindabad* and *Maharaja Bahadur Ki Jai.* A report of these loyal demonstrations appeared next day in *The Daily Khidmat*, the official organ of the National Conference. This episode fully convinced the Maharaja that the Nationalists were at his disposal. But to make himself doubly sure he sent Dr. Chhapda, a confident of the Maharaja's Private Secretary, to meet Abdullah in Badrawah Jail. Presumably Abdullah confirmed the contents of his letter to his Jammu friend and the changed views of his colleagues and workers outside. Under the Maharaja's command, therefore, he was transferred in September, 1947, from Badrawah Sub Jail to Military Cantonment at Badami Bagh on the outskirt of Srinagar. For more than three weeks pourparlers were held between the envoys of the Maharaja and the Nationalist leader. It will be for the future historian to unearth what exactly transpired in these meetings but one might try to surmise about it by events that followed. Abdullah, the self-styled arch-revolutionary, who was convicted of high sedition in 1946, was set free at the successful termination of these confabulations on 29th September, 1947. Immediately after release he, accompanied by his wife, presented himself at the palace where both of them were granted an audience by the Maharaja to pay *nazrana*, the accepted token of loyalty under an autocratic feudal raj. The unsuspecting Muslims and the jubilant and victorious reactionary Hindus accorded a magnificent reception to Abdullah. He addressed a gathering of nearly thirty thousand in the Hazuri Bagh where he praised the Con-

gress leaders, denounced the two-nation theory of the Muslim League and condemned Jinnah forhis opposition to'Quit Kashmir' movement. Two days later on 1st October in reply to a question it was disclosed in the State legislature on behalf of the Government that "Sheikh Abdullah was released as an act of royal clemency the Maharaja having pardoned the unexpired period of his imprisonment". Obviously the Dogra Maharaja's authority was undamaged and the sponsors of 'Quit Kashmir' agitation had acknowledged it to be so.

That was not all. Soon after having come to an understanding with the Nationalists, the Maharaja, with the concurrence of the Congress leaders, appointed a non-Kashmiri Hindu, Lala M.C. Mahajan, as his Prime Minister for a period of five years. He also appointed two other outsiders as his permanent Ministers, one of them, Ram Lal Batra, as Deputy Prime Minister. The remaining three posts in the State Council were most probably to be filled with the nominees of the National Conference, if acceptable to the Maharaja. And this was the price the Nationalists were to get for their betrayal of Kashmir democracy. But as we shall presently see the liberation movement came to the succour of the Nationalists and they got unexpectedly much more than they had bargained for.

With the return of Gandhi from Kashmir there was rapid deterioration in the political situation in the State. Having decided to partition the subcontinent on the basis of religion it was presumed by all reasonable people that Kashmir will form part of Pakistan. The Muslim League leaders, of course, took it for granted. For that reason the head of the post offices in the State had received instructions to hoist the Pakistan Flag on 15th August 1947, the Independence Day. Such flags had been kept ready and were actually unfurled on that day on all buildings occupied by the post offices in Srinagar. Now that the situation had changed by the success of the Mahatma's mission, General Janak Singh got these flags removed. *The Daily Hamdard* adversely commented on this ill-conceived and mischievous action of the Kashmir authorites. For that sin the journal was

ordered not to appear in future till every word to be published in its columns was first censored by the District Magistrate. The paper ultimately closed down thanks to rigorous pre-censorship.

Every action of the Maharaja and the Janak Singh Government was convincing even the most skeptical that the State was being forcibly made a part of India. It is true that the Maharaja wrote to both the Indian and the Pakistani Governments requesting them to enter into a "stand-still" agreement with the State and while Pakistan Government immediately accepted the offer the Government of India remained hesitant. But there was enough circumstantial evidence that the Maharaja was only playing for time; otherwise the die had already been cast.

I have made it abundantly clear that the people of Kashmir wanted to keep their motherland aloof from the communal savagery, the carnage and the holocaust which were raging in British India before and after the partition. Barring the National Conference, other main political parties in the country, including the Muslim Conference, had repeatedly advised the Maharaja to be friendly with both the Congress and the League blocs in the Indian Constituent Assembly and to remain neutral without joining the one or the other. It was only when the Maharaja's fatal desire became manifest and when he began to make feverish preparations to get the State acceded to India that these parties veered round to the viewpoint that Kashmir should accede to Pakistan. In order to give the Maharaja the last chance to prove his *bonafides* the leaders proposed that the issue may be decided by a plebiscite to be held on the basis of adult franchise. On September 5, 1947 the Working Committee of the All Jammu and Kashmir Kisan Mazdoor Conference adopted a resolution on the subject. It is of such an important nature that we need not offer any apology for reproducing it in full:

"The most important national problem facing the people of Jammu and Kashmir at the present moment is whether the State should accede to India or to Pakistan. The future of the country depends on the solution of this problem. If it is solved in a right way the four million State people can live peacefully and comfortably in future; they will then also make sound progress. Otherwise the State shall have to face civil war and ruin.

"Five months ago meetings of the Working Committee and the General Council of the Kisan Mazdoor Conterence were held at Achhabal on 6th and 7th April. A resolution was adopted in these meetings advising the Maharaja of Kashmir that after establishing friendly relations with both the Congress and the Muslim League he should declare the independence of the State and that simultaneously he should introduce complete responsible government in the country. Things have moved with lightening rapidity during past five months. On 3rd June the British Government announced a plan of India's independence which has been accepted by both the Congress and the Muslim League. According to the plan the subcontinent has been partitioned on the very day of independence. Today the two dominions of India and Pakistan are in existence. The basic principle which guided the partition of the country according to 3rd June Plan was that all the provinces and districts where Hindus are in majority have been included in the Indian Union and all those regions where Muslims are in a majority have been put together to form Pakistan. The provinces of the Punjab and Bengal have been divided into two parts each under the operation of the same principle. The district of Sylhet in Assam has also been included in the province of East Pakistan according to it.

"British statesmen and the Indian politicians particularly the Congress leaders have advised the native rulers that they should join either of the two dominions and should in no case remain independent Lord Mountbatten in his capacity as Viceroy made an important pronouncement that while deciding to accede to either dominion the Princes should take into consideration the geographical position of their respective States, that is, the right decision for a State will be to accede to the dominion which is adjacent to it.

"The Working Committee of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference has fully and carefully considered the developments of the last five months. It has also consulted the majority of the members of the General Council of the Conference. The Committee is of the opinion that there is now no alternative before the State but to join Pakistan. If she does not do so, the country and its people shall have to face immense trials and tribulations.

"Hundreds of the States have already acceded to either the Indian Union or Pakistan in accordance with the principle on the basis of which the subcontinent was partitioned. At present only two of the States—Kashmir and Hyderabad—remain which have taken no decision yet. Recent developments show that these two States also cannot remain aloof for a long time and soon they shall have to decide about their future.

"The overwhelming majority of Kashmir's population is Muslim. The State is contiguous with Pakistan territories. All the three big highways and all the rivers of the State go into Pakistan. For these reasons

the Working Committee is of the opinion that the State should accede to Pakistan. This alone will be the natural and the right course to adopt. The State cannot remain independent; nor can it, owing to its overwhelming Muslim population and being adjacent to the Pakistan territories, accede to India. The Working Committee hold the view that the majority of the population desire to accede to Pakistan and the welfare of the 39 lakhs of peasants and workers also lies in this.

"The Working Committee appeals to all the people of the State in general, to whatever section, caste or creed they belong, and the working classes in particular that they should unanimously request the Maharaja to declare the State's accession to Pakistan.

"If the Maharaja entertains any doubts about the obvious public opinion that the State should accede to Pakistan then he should order a referendum in which all adults should have the right to vote on the issue whether the State should accede to India or to Pakistan.

"The Working Committee hopes that the people from all parts of the State will support this democratic method of solution so that peace is maintained and the country can progress."

The resolution was confirmed by the members of the General Council of the Conference a few days later. It was published in the Press on the 16th September and thousands of copies of the resolution were distributed in the State in leaflet form during the middle of the month.

On 18th September the Kashmir Socialist Party passed the following resolution unanimously:

"The Kashmir Socialist Party has given their best and closest consideration to the question whether the State of Jammu and Kashmir should accede to India or to Pakistan or it should remain independent. The Party is of the opinion that in view of the developments during the last few months the natural and the best course for the State to adopt would be to join Pakistan and not India. For obvious and substantial reasons the Party believes that the State cannot remain independent. After mature consideration the Party has arrived at the decision that in the best interests of the poor and backward people accession to Pakistan is desirable. The Party impresses upon the Maharaja that without any further unnecessary delay he should make an announcement accordingly."

On 22nd September a convention of the prominent workers of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference held in Srinagar under the presidentship of Hamid Ullah Khan, adopted a resolution demanding that the State should accede to Pakistan. Hamid Ullah presented a memorandum to General Janak Singh,

Prime Minister, impressing upon him "the desirability of taking a speedy decision about the accession issue in accordance with the desire of the overwhelming population of the people". He demanded further that all repressive laws be withdrawn, all political prisoners released and a constituent assembly set up to frame a constitution with responsible government for the State as its objective. Hundreds of telegrams were sent to the Maharaja from all over Kashmir imploring, beseeching and advising him not to accede to the Indian Union. The Rajas of Hunza and Nagar, the two feudatory chiefs of Gilgit, warned the Maharaja of dire consequences if he took the dangerous step of acceding to India. These warnings were broadcast from the Radio and published in the Press. But the Maharaja remained adamant and would not revoke the suicidal decision he had taken behind the back of the State people.

While releasing all the Nationalist prisoners, detenus and under-trials most of whom had been imprisoned for sedition and some for serious offences involving moral turpitude, the Maharaja and his Government did not have the elementry statesmanship to simultaneously set free the few detenus of the Muslim Conference Party who had been clapped into prison without trial in September 1946 on mere suspicion or for technical offence of having defied the District Magistrate's orders prohibiting holding of public meetings. Obviously it was presumed that the Muslim Conference leaders would support Kashmir's accession to Pakistan though having been arrested when Pakistan was still in embryo they had never had the opportunity to express any clear opinion on the future of the State. It was taken for granted that they would prove a source of trouble for the unholy alliance of the Maharaja and the Nationalists. The State policy was pronouncedly invidious.

Whether it was a part of the Maharaja—Abdullah understanding or not, simultaneously with the release of Nationalists from different jails a campaign of ruthless repression was launched against all individuals, groups, parties, and newspapers which refused to support the wicked designs of the anti-democratic alliance. On the one hand despite the District

Magistrate's ban on all meetings and processions the Nationalists were given complete liberty to hold public gatherings and take out processions. They were encouraged and even subsidized to do so. On the other hand all parties and people who were critical of the Maharaja and his supporters were deprived of every human and political right; they could not hold meetings *even indoors*; they could not bring out a procession; all their papers were either forced to close down or were ordered to be rigorously censored before publication from beginning to end. Some prominent leaders of the Muslim Conference including Yusuf Shah, Prof. Ishaq and Hamid Ullah were refused re-entry into their homeland when they returned from Karachi where they had gone for consultations with Jinnah.

In Poonch and Mirpur, populated by thousands of demobilised soldiers of the Second World War, the Maharaja's armies, in order to assert the Dogra Rule, wantonly plundered whole areas inhabited by Muslims and set fire to their homes. Poonch leaders telegraphically implored the Maharaja to protect the victims but to no purpose. A Dogra colonel, Baldev Singh Pathania, who was sent as Military Administrator of the disturbed area was reported to have said: "We shall re-conquer the land as did our predecessor Maharaja Gulab Singh." More and more platoons of the Dogra regiments were drafted to crush the Muslims into submission. This started a small battle in that part of the country. The Government wanted to massacre people without letting the world know what it was doing.

As if this was not enough, Mehr Chand Mahajan, the new Prime Minister, a few hours after taking over charge on 15th October, issued a most provocative statement to the Press—presumably with the approval of the Maharaja—in which he praised the Indian leaders and Abdullah and denounced Pakistan in unstatesmanlike and unbecoming language. This statement ignited the explosive atmosphere. It was a battle cry and a challenge to the self-respect of the freedom lovers in the State. Incredibly enough with such pugnacious methods Mahajan promised to make Kashmir the "Switzerland of the East".

On 18th October the Socialists decided to approach the

authorities at New Delhi and Karachi with the purpose of requesting them not to interfere in the internal politics of the State and to leave Kashmiris alone so that the country may not get involved in the wave of disturbances, fanaticism and bloodshed which had swept over North India. A deputation under the leadership of Prem Nath Bazaz was nominated and a letter was immediately addressed to the Government to grant air passage to the three members of the deputation to proceed to Delhi. The reply came in the shape of instructions to the Police Chief that all the deputationists should be taken into custody.

Clearly the Maharaja, aware of the support of the Indian Union and the Kashmir Nationalists, was itching for a fight and was twisting the tail of the lion of revolution. The animal raised its ferocious head. The enraged people all over the Valley and other parts predominantly inhabited by Muslims rose in rebellion against the despotic and despised foreign ruler. From Poonch the disturbances spread to Muzaffarabad and some fighters for liberation provisionally founded a parallel government in the town which subsequently became known as the Azad Kashmir Government. This Government forthwith started to function both in the civil and military spheres. Some Azad armies were raised as if in the twinkling of an eye. Thousands of the demobilised soldiers living in Poonch and Mirpur joined the revolutionary armies. Hundreds of young men in the State serving in the Pakistan Armed Forces resigned and came home to participate in the national war of liberation. Deeply moved by the plight of State Muslims the fanatical tribesmen from the trans border region (ancient Gandhara) rushed to the rescue of their old neighbours and co-religionists in the State. Within days the whole atmosphere was surcharged with excitement and a revolutionary zeal and there was no corner of Kashmir where people were not imbued with the spirit of independence. Stupidly the Maharaja and his Government tried to stem this rising tide with outworn methods. Not heeding the warning of the times, the Government started on the 22nd of October arrests of popular leaders in the Kashmir Valley. The first to be taken into custody was Prem Nath Bazaz. A conti-

gent of policemen arrived at his house early at dawn and arrested him without a warrant. Then followed the arrests of hundreds of others belonging to different political organisations. It was clear that the Maharaja was bent upon a show down. The Azad Kashmir Government, therefore accepted the challenge and declaring on the next day, 23 of October, a holy war for the liberation of homeland ordered the Azad forces to proceed towards Srinagar. The Maharaja's armies stationed in Muzaffarbad and Domel were easily vanquished. Almost all the Muslims in the Dogra regiments joined the revolution.

In Gilgit the warlike local people rose in rebellion supported by the Rajas of Hunza, Nagar, Punial and Yasin—all Muslim. They overwhelmed, disarmed and imprisoned the Dogra garrison and its newly appointed Governor, the haughty Brigadier Ghansar Singh, who refused to see the reality till the zero hour arrived. The Gilgit Scouts, an official organisation of armed local men to preserve law and order, joined the rebels. Having liberated their homeland the rebels went towards Skardu and Bunji and with ease captured these towns despite the stiff opposition of the Dogra garrisons stationed there. Encouraged thus both the wings of the rebels then advanced towards the Valley of Kashmir. On Bunji side they reached as far as Bandipur and through Skardu crossing Zojila they appeared knocking at Sonamarg, the Gate of the Valley on the North-East in the spring of 1948. At both the places they were met by the Indian armies and pushed back.

On entering the borders of the State the tribesmen did not behave like disciplined forces of a revolutionary government. Despite the strict orders of their officers many of them committed heinous and disgraceful crimes. They looted people, sacked towns, burnt houses, killed innocent non-Muslims and raped women. Some Nationalist Muslims were also done to death. Abdul Aziz the local Nationalist leader was murdered at Muzaffarbad. Among those who were killed by the tribesmen in Baramulla was Mohammed Maqbul Sherwani who, it will be recalled, had attempted to disturb the public meeting which Jinnah addressed in 1944 on his way back from

Kashmir. Sherwani was brutally impaled in the market place and fired upon till he was dead. The reports about these excesses have been exaggerated by the Hindu publicists and the Nationalist renegades. Nevertheless the vandalism and the atrocities were abominable and surely harmed the cause of freedom besides bringing discredit on the Azad Kashmir Government. Every patriot and lover of Kashmir has rightly condemned these bestialities in no uncertain terms. The Kashmiris were reminded of the days of the hated Pathan rule by what some of these wicked tribesmen did. A small force of about 200 soldiers, the only available one in Srinagar barracks, under the command of Brigadier Rajendra Singh was despatched by the Maharaja to face the invaders. They fought boldly but were destroyed; only about a dozen soldiers returned alive to describe the feats of bravery and valour that their comrades performed on the battlefield defending the Valley for the Maharaja and the Nationalists. Brigadier Rajendra Singh's death was really heroic.

Having vanquished the brave but small Dogra force, the tribesmen found the way clear towards the capital. But they did not enter Srinagar. By-passing the city they tried to reach the aerodrome, thorugh Budgam, to occupy it. But before they could achieve this end Indian armies had landed in the Valley.

The Maharaja was now aghast at what he had done. He saw power and the crown tumbling down before his very eyes. Even his life was in peril. So to save himself and all the movable wealth in his palace, he loaded at midnight on 25th October about a hundred motor lorries with precious goods and left Kashmir for Jammu, his native town. According to Campbell Johnson, the author of *Mission with Mountbatten*, the Maharaja had been advised to leave the Valley by V.P. Menon, Secretary to the States Ministry of the Government of India. It is interesting to note that the Maharaja managed to carry the idol of his family temple, the Gadadhar, with him.

Seated safely at Jammu, the fugitive Maharaja now formally approached the Government of India for help. In his letter of 26th October addressed to Lord Mountbatten, Governor General, Hari Singh with feigned innocence stated: "I wanted

to take time to decide to which Dominion I should accede, whether it is not in the interest of both the Dominions and my State to stand independent, of course with friendly and cordial relations with both". The Maharaja conveniently forgot that weeks before he wrote this letter Kashmiris advocating neutrality and independence had been gagged and imprisoned, that journals criticising the aggressive pro-India policy of the Maharaja's Government had been stopped or ordered to be rigorously precensored and that the anti-Pakistan Nationalists were given fullest freedom to terrorise their opponents and granted complete immunity when they took the law in their own hands. In order to prove his own innocence, and the guilt of Pakistan, Hari Singh told Lord Mountbatten in his letter that "the Pakistan Government under the stand-still agreement are operating post and telegraph system inside the State". But he forgot to add that when the Postal Department under instructions from the Pakistan Government hoisted the Pakistan flags on Independence Day, General Janak Singh, Prime Minister of the Maharaja, got them pulled down. Hari Singh claimed, as he had always done since 1931 whenever Kashmiris had risen against him, to enjoy loyal support of the people for his policy even when he had been hounded out of the Valley. He ascribed the disturbances to the influence of outsiders, "freebooters from Pakistan" as he called them. "The people of my State," he informed the Governor General, "both Muslims and non-Muslims generally, have taken no part at all". To save his prized possession he asked for help from the Dominion of India. "Naturally they (Indian Government) cannot send the help asked for by me", Hari Singh stated in an obliging tone, "without my State acceding to India. I have accordingly decided to do so and I attach the Instrument of Accession for acceptance by your Government". According to that document the Maharaja handed over the control of three subjects—Defence, Foreign Affairs and Transport—to the Government of India. Hari Singh contemptuously referred to the establishment of the provisional revolutionary government of the State people at Muzaffarbad as "a story that had been put up by the Pakistan Radio".

Immediately after the acceptance of the Instrument of Accession by the Governor General of India, the Indian armies were flown to the Valley. A grim fight was waged on the west of Srinagar. For many days the fate of the contestants remained doubtful but ultimately the well-equipped Indians were able to push back the tribesmen and the Azad Kashmir forces eight miles beyond Uri. The insurgents from Gilgit were also driven out of Gurez Valley and Kargil *tehsil* during 1948.

Meanwhile the arrests of the popular political leaders with pro-Pakistan views about the accession issue and the incursion of tribesmen jeopardised the lives of non-Muslims in the State. Thousands of Sikhs and Hindus were slaughtered in Muzaffarbad, Poonch, Mirpur and the adjoining areas which were occupied by the Azad Kashmir armies. Simultaneously or a couple of days earlier or later, I have no means of knowing, the massacre of the Muslims started in the three districts of the Jammu province viz., Kathua, Udhampur and Jammu. When the Maharaja ran away from the Valley and reached Jammu the killings became general. It is said that he encouraged the heinous campaign. Whether on this side or that, the cold blooded massacre of human beings, men, women and children, was ghastly. Even suckling babies and old men were not spared. Savages would feel ashamed at what men were doing. I was inside the prison during all this period. The blood-curdling reports that I got in the cell made me shiver and shudder.

The news of the Maharaja's flight spread in the Valley like wild fire the next morning. There was panic among the non-Muslims. A mass exodus of non-Kashmiri Hindus started. The terror-stricken Dogra Hindus ran away by whatever transport was available at the time. At the first touch the Kashmir revolution had torn the Treaty of Amritsar to pieces ; the will of the people had almost triumphed ; the Dogra Raj had ended ; the Maharaja had been made to quit.

It is an irony of history that when Kashmir had actually attained liberation from the alien Dogra Rule and the democratic forces had driven the Maharaja together with his kith and kin out of the Valley, the Nationalists, who had in 1946

sponsored the 'Quit Kashmir' agitation to get the Treaty of Amritsar abrogated, raised the banner of counter-revolution and mustered their whole strength to thwart the forces of freedom. Let no one think that I say this to give the Nationalists a bad name and then condemn them. Abdullah himself frankly stated the nature of his historic mission in the clearest possible language in various public meetings in Jammu soon after the war of liberation started. These speeches which he delivered on 16th, 17th and 18th of November 1947 were considered so important by the National Conference that they were published in a booklet form entitled *Khutbat-i-Sher-i-Kashmir* by the Party. In his speech at the Museum Ground (Jammu) delivered to 'fifty thousand' people Abdullah declared :

> "I want to tell the Hindus of Jammu who are raising the slogan of '*Maharaja Bahadur ki Jai*' (Long live Maharaja Bahadur) that I have no difference with the slogan ; but I want to ask this much. Do you want to see the Maharaja Bahadur as the king of only the Jammu city or the whole State? You have to decide this. If you want to keep him as the king of only one or two districts you can surely do so and I know that you have arranged thus. You have emptied this area of the Muslims. But my desire is that the Maharaja Bahadur should remain the king of the whole of Jammu and Kashmir and not only of two or three districts."[1]

Abdullah knew that in the new set-up that he was attempting to build in co-operation with the Dogra ruling classes after trampling upon democracy, the Maharaja was to be the lord and master while he himself and the people were to be the vassals. In order to appease the Dogra reactionaries who had been emboldened by the presence of Indian armed forces and were creating havoc in the Jammu districts he virtually in sack cloth and ashes, made the following humiliating offer in a very helpless condition :

> "Let us go to the Maharaja. I also will go to him in the position of his subject and tell him : 'My Lord ! do you also want this (the creation of havoc) ? We wanted that the forty lakhs of State people should adore you and let the world witness the same. But these unwise friends of yours have made our life difficult."[2]

When even this proved insufficient to pacify the Dogra

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[1] *Khutbat-i-Sher-i-Kashmir*, Page 26.

[2] Ibid Page 28.

wrath, Abdullah went further and exonerated the Hindu fanatics of the innocent blood that they had shed. Indeed he encouraged them to kill State Muslims who did not agree to remain with India. In the speech which he delivered on the 16th November, 1947 alluding to the mass massacre of Muslims in Jammu he observed unabashedly :

> "Jammu Muslims are, to a large extent, themselves responsible for what has happened to them, because, though in a minority, they had, by their words and deeds, let loose their tongues in favour of Pakistan. But you murdered innocent barbers and washermen who knew nothing about politics. How unjust it was to kill children and women who did not even know the Muslim League or Pakistan." [1]

The implications of these observations are obvious. Abdullah had no objection if the Dogra fanatics had massacred only the politically conscious State Muslims.

These statements are enough to prove what a shameful role Abdullah played consciously and deliberately during the critical days. However, the Nationalists by themselves were so insignificant when compared with the people's might that they should have been crushed at the very first clash with the revolutionary forces. "Kashmir was the severest and biggest test for the Indian Army," observed Abdullah while presenting a farewell address 'on behalf of the people and Government of Kashmir' to General Cariappa at a function in Srinagar on 3rd October 1952. "Though the unarmed people were roused to heroic acts of resistance against the aggressors, without the timely assistance of India that heroic resistance would have been of no avail". Realising this Abdullah appealed to his powerful Indian friends to come to his aid. Congress leaders needed no such appeal. They were, as we know, already making preparations to meet this eventuality. Under the pretext that the Kashmir people, represented by the 'popular hero', Abdullah and the 'popular organisation' National Conference, had asked for help in their great distress, the Government of India despatched, on the 26th October, its armies by air and by land to occupy the State.

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[1] Ibid, Page 9

NATIONALISTS COME TO POWER

When in 1946 the Nationalists launched their 'Quit Kashmir' agitation and assured the State Muslims that they wanted to end the Dogra Hindu Rule which had been foisted upon the unwilling Kashmiris in 1846 by British Imperialism through the Treaty of Amritsar, the Socialists had warned their countrymen to beware of this fraudulent move. Before starting the agitation Abdullah had issued statements and delivered speeches declaring that the Treaty of Amritsar between the British and Gulab Singh was immoral and a fraud played on the Kashmir people, who were sold for a paltry sum of £5,00,000 to the Dogras. The Nationalist leader had also stressed that he and his adherents did not recognise the Maharaja as their ruler. The two main planks of the agitation, therefore, were, first, that the Treaty of Amritsar should be abrogated and, second, that as a natural consequence the Dogras should quit the Valley. Having closely followed the infamous record of the opportunist, anti-social and anti-democratic activities of the Nationalist leaders and keeping in view the repeatedly declared policy of the Congress and the Congress-sponsored All India States Peoples Conference, that the princely order was to be preserved, no sensible man could be deceived by the 'Quit Kashmir' slogan of the National Conference which was ideologically the local branch of the Congress. But some progressive sections of the Kashmir people were taken in by the pseudo-revolutionary slogans of the Nationalists denouncing the alien and autocratic Dogra Rule. Soon after the start of the agitation, however, truth began to be revealed when one after another the Nationalist leaders resiled from their original position. Eminent Congress leaders including Nehru openly rebuked the Nationalists for raising this slogan, and, on their behalf, disowned it. This process culminated in the volte face of Abdullah who admitted before the Sessions Court trying him for sedition, that he never meant to end the Dogra Rule. Still for the whole period when the Nationalist leaders were in imprisonment a large section of Muslims continued to be sedulously duped. The events that followed the successful mission of Gandhi in Kashmir exposed everything and most of

the adherents of the National Conference received a rude shock.

On 27th October, 1947 Abdullah, claiming to represent all people of the Jammu and Kashmir State, signed, jointly with Maharaja Hari Singh who was represented by his Prime Minister, M. C. Mahajan, the deed of State's accession to the Indian Union subject to the condition of a plebiscite, which condition as we shall presently see was never meant to be implemented, at any event, never by a free and impartial method. In March 1846 at the fall of Sikh Empire in the Punjab, the advancing British Imperialism handed over the dumb-driven Kashmiris to the tender mercies of the alien Dogras, but even during those unsettled and backward times when the country was infested with political adventurers in abundance, not one self-seeker among the Kashmir politicians could be found unscrupulous enough to soil his hands by attesting the Treaty of Amritsar. One hundred and one years later at the liquidation of British Imperialism in the subcontinent of India, when Kashmir was politically awakened and in revolt and when Kashmiris had virtually hounded out the Dogra rulers from the Valley, Indian Imperialism thrust them back. This time a handful of Kashmiris, sponsors of 'Quit Kashmir' agitation calling themselves revolutionaries and patriots not only became a party to the deed but also hugged it as their Magna Carta. In a speech on the occasion of prize distribution ceremony of the Gandhi Memorial College, Jammu, held on 29th November, 1949 Sheikh Abdullah told a Dogra audience that "in October 1947 the Maharaja ran away from Kashmir, but I took charge of the broken and smitten Government *in the name of the Maharaja*".[1]

Abdullah not only knew well that the Maharaja was an alien, whose rulership Kashmiris wanted to end and against whom he and his National Conference had launched the 'Quit Kashmir' agitation, he was also from the very outset aware of the crimes of Hari Singh. In a speech at Panthal on the occasion of the inauguration of a canal in April, 1951, Abdullah observed :

[1] *The Ranbir*, Jammu, Dated 1st. December 1949.

"I want to tell those people who are anxious to bring back the Maharaja that Hari Singh will never return to the State. He has massacred the Muslims of this place. His wife also was his accomplice in these nefarious actions. There is no room for any murderer in this State".[1]

A sa price of this faithlessness to his country and nation Abdullah got what he was pining for — personal power in abundance.

Scared out of his wits by the revolutionary climate, warnings about which he had non-challantly pooh poohed only a couple of weeks earlier, entertaining little hopes of re-capturing the Kashmir Valley and afraid of losing even the districts of Jammu, Maharaja Hari Singh easily and too willingly consented to hand over the entire administrative control to Abdullah as his Chief Emergency Officer. In his letter to Lord Mountbatten referred to above, Hari Singh informed the Government of India that he had "decided to ask Sheikh Abdullah to carry the responsibilities in this emergency with my Premier". At the start of revolution in China more than thirty years earlier the last Manchu monarch did a similar thing when he appointed the opportunist Yuan Shih Kai as his Prime Minister to stem the tide of revolution, the students of history know with what results. Yuan Shik Kai could neither save the Manchu Dynasty nor continue himself to rule for a long time. The people's opposition thrust them aside into oblivion and the revolutionary tide went its way.

Abdullah took over charge as the Chief Emergency Officer on the morning of the 27th October. Before doing so the leader of the 'Quit Kashmir' agitation solemnly made a declaration in presence of the Maharaja to remain loyal. The wording of the oath he actually took was:

"I, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah. son of Mohammed Ibrahim, who has been appointed as Administrator solemnly promise that I shall remain loyal to His Highness Rajrajeshwar Maharajadhiraj Sri Maharaja Hari Singh Ji Bahadur Inder Mahinder Separ-i-saltanati Englishe, ruler of Jammu and Kashmir and his heirs and successors and shall honestly discharge the duties that are to be entrusted to me".

Many Kashmir Muslims who had fondly expected to see the end of Dogra rule as a result of the 'Quit Kashmir' agitation

[1] *The Chand*, dated 16th April, 1951.

were staggered at the unholy alliance of the Dogra rulers and the Nationalists because, not possessing discriminative and critical intellects, they had all along regarded the Nationalists as revolutionaries. The leftist slogans raised during the 'Quit Kashmir' agitation were still ringing in their ears. But there was really nothing new in this alliance. It had started behind the scene during the closing days of the Ayyengar regime seven years ago when for certain minor concessions to their party the Nationalists had put their organization at the disposal of the Dogra Government. This bond of friendship was cemented when in 1944 Maharaja Hari Singh condescended to grant one post in the State Cabinet to a leader of the Nationalist Party in lieu of the Party's expression of sentiments of loyalty for the crown and throne. Tasting of power had whetted the hunger of the Nationalists and they demanded more. For reasons already explained in detail the Maharaja was not prepared to grant it in 1946. Hence the 'Quit Kashmir' threat. The Nationalist agitation of 1946 despite its specious platitudes and high-sounding slogans, was not a revolutionary struggle but a domestic quarrel between two parties—the Maharaja and the Nationalists—having a similar ideology and espousing the same politics. The only difference was about the share of power that each should enjoy. So when the real revolution came both realized the common danger and resolved the differences. Of course the Nationalists being in an advantageous position because of the paramountcy of the Congress rule at Delhi derived much benefit in the beginning. But the Maharaja was not a loser. Indeed if there would have been smooth sailing in the joint adventure he would have emerged better of the two. But the international complicacies no less than the heroic and formidable resistance of the State people forced the Indian Government to give more and more importance to the renegade Nationalists during the period of transition through which we still continue to pass.

Abdullah was overjoyed to obtain the commands of the Maharaja appointing him the Chief Emergency Administrator. He was too anxious and too willing to suppress the unprece-

dented upsurge in the country which was steadily enveloping every part of the State. But this was not an easy job. Left to themselves the Nationalists could never have withstood, even for a few days, the dashing waves of the people's revolution. But backed by the mighty land and air forces of the Indian Government they were able to create terror and fright.

Some day when people of Kashmir attain freedom, an enquiry shall have to be made into the conduct of the Indian armies while they remained in occupation of the State. Many harrowing reports of the atrocities which they are said to have perpetrated on the people have been published. It is difficult to say how far they are correct and founded on facts. But from personal knowledge I can say that some soldiers did not certainly behave well. They resorted to acts of arson, rape, loot and murder. If undisciplined and unorganised Muslim tribesmen are condemnable for what they did the trained Indian soldiers who were members of regular armies deserve harsher criticism.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

INDIA'S CLAIM EXAMINED

"Knowing that Kashmir is predominantly Mussalman it is one day bound to become a Mussalman State".—**Mahatma Gandhi.**

THE Congress rulers and the Hindu leaders have advanced diverse reasons from time to time to justify the occupation of the Kashmir State by the Indian military. Before proceeding further to describe and discuss the developments in the politics of the State after the Nationalists came to power it would prove helpful if these reasons and claims are closely examined. The first argument advanced by the leaders of the Government of India is that the State was attacked by the tribesmen and when the people of the State as well as the ruler approached India for help she could not withhold it. Besides, they say, both the Maharaja and the popular political party, the National Conference under the leadership of Abdullah, voluntarily agreed to sign the Instrument of Accession which made Kashmir a part of the Indian Union like other provinces. Therefore the Government of India was morally, legally as well as constitutionally justified in sending its armies to the State to defend it against the enemy and to throw out the invaders.

I have already stated in the last chapter the circumstances under which the Maharaja and the Nationalists approached India. I have shown that it is a travesty of truth to say that the people of the State desired, much less requested, India to send her armies. There is much evidence to show that the large majority of the population of the State, almost the entire Muslim community and an appreciable number of non-Muslims, was totally against the Maharaja declaring accession to India. Indeed the people had resented the interference of the Congress leaders in the internal politics of the State since 1941, six years before the independence of the subcontinent. Some prominent political parties and public leaders had expressed these views in no uncertain terms. There are

sound reasons to believe that if the Congress leaders had not made repeated and vigorous attempts to influence the Maharaja to function in a partisan spirit and take the fatal step of making preparations for joining India there would have been no incursion of tribesmen into Kashmir, nor would the State have passed through the dark days which the wretched people witnessed during October-November 1947.

To accept the National Conference as the sole representative body or the most popular political party in the State was by no means justified. The party had not a single member in the Legislative Assembly. True, the party had boycotted the elections to the Legislature in January 1947 but that could only make its strength doubtful; the Conference might or might not have been victorious at the polls. There surely were some other parties, notably the Muslim Conference and the Kisan Mazdoor Conference, challenging its strength and claiming to represent the voice of the people. Most of all, the birth of Pakistan had made the position of the National Conference precarious as it had done with other pro-Congress organisations in the British Indian provinces with Muslim majorities. Had the Congress not entertained any designs of aggression it should have desisted from directly or indirectly interfering with the problem facing the State. It should have helped the State people and the Maharaja to maintain peace and arrive between themselves at some decision about the future of the country that would appear the best for them according to their own light. But the Congress leaders flew in the face of facts and caused grave troubles for the State.

In accordance with the Mountbatten Plan published on June 3, 1947, which, when fully implemented, divided the subcontinent into two sovereign states and brought Pakistan into being, all the provinces and areas where Hindus were in majority, volunteered to remain within the Indian Republic and all the regions and tracts, where the majority of population consisted of Muslims, decided to form the State of Pakistan. This Plan had the previous consent of the accredited leaders of all the communities. As a matter of fact Lord Mountbatten,

the then Viceroy of India, got it sanctioned by the British Cabinet after he had secured the approval of all the prominent leaders. Soon after the publication of the Plan the top-most leaders of the National Congress, the Muslim League and the Akali Party, in their speeches broadcast by the All India Radio, recommended the Plan, in unambiguous language, as an agreed solution of the Indian problem, to their respective communities and followers. It was contended by the Congress that the peoples of the N.W.F.P. and Sylhet, a district in Assam, both with Muslim majorities believed in the Congress ideology and desired to remain with India. Provision had therefore been made in the plan for these people to express their will. The results of the plebiscites held in both areas proved that the contention of the Congress leaders was unfounded as the large majority of the people in both voted in favour of accession to Pakistan. Thus not even a small patch of land was left in the whole of the subcontinent where the majority of population is Muslim which remained voluntarily with India. Division of Bengal and Punjab also took place according to the same principle and, as a matter of fact, it was the Congress which demanded that it should be so. By accepting the plan for partition of India and by demanding the division of Bengal and the Punjab on communal basis, the Congress leaders had virtually accepted the two-nation theory of Jinnah and proved that their organisation despite their tall presumption was in essence a political body functioning for the protection of the rights of the Hindu community.

The Mountbatten Plan had recognised the right of the Indian States, or more precisely the right of the Princes of these States, to accede to either country or, if any of them so desired it, to remain independent at the termination of the paramountcy of the British Crown on 15th of August 1947, the day on which according to the Act of the British Parliament the subcontinent of India was to attain independence. It was stated that the sovereignty held by the British Crown would revert on that day to the Indian States. It was also generally understood that the Princes would, while deciding

about the future position of their respective States, be effectively influenced by the opinion of their own people and no such course would be adopted by any ruler as would enrage or infuriate the public of the State. In a Press conference explaining the implications of the clause regarding the Indian States in the Plan, Lord Mountbatten said that it was expected that the Princes while deciding about the accession issue "would take the geographical position of the State into consideration". But the liberty of action recognised in the Plan proved illusory, or at best theoretical, because in practice the Congress leaders honoured this part of the Plan more in breach than in observance; nor did they care to accept the explanation of Lord Mountbatten whom, let it be remembered, they had chosen as their first Governor General in independent India. The State of Junagad in Kathiawar, under a Muslim Prince, acceded to Pakistan but was attacked by the Indian Union and forcibly incorporated on the plea that the population of the State is predominantly (81 p.c.) Hindu, the State is surrounded on all sides by the Indian territories and it has the cultural, social, economic and other ties with India. Ostensibly under pretext of Razakar atrocities, but really on similar grounds, the premier State of Hyderabad under the Muslim Nizam was annexed by the Government of India through the so-called police action. Several responsible Muslim and non-Muslim leaders of the State including the Nizam and his Cabinet argued till the last that the people desired to remain independent and in any event the fate of the State should be decided by the democratic method of a plebiscite held on the basis of adult franchise but this reasonable suggestion was turned down on the assumption that the large majority of the State's people being Hindu, it should be taken for granted that they will be only too anxious to join India. This policy of coercion by political, moral and economic methods was utilised in case of some other States, notably Travancore, Indore, Bhopal and Rampur.

By the end of September 1948 there was, in the whole subcontinent, barring the State of Jammu and Kashmir, no province, State, area or region left which had not acceded to or been

incorporated in the Indian Union if the majority of population was Hindu and in Pakistan if the majority happened to be Muslim. Obviously in accordance with the basic principle governing the partition viz. the consideration of the religion professed by people in different parts coupled with the policy pursued by the Congress leaders, the Jammu and Kashmir State, whose population is preponderatingly (77 p.c.) Muslim—almost the same as is the ratio of Hindus in Junagad and Hyderabad to the total populations of these States—should legitimately and unconditionally belong to Pakistan and must in fairness go to it. "Those who accepted the partition of India—the Congress—on the basis of communal majority", declared Dr. N. B. Khare, President of the Hindu Mahasabha, in an interview to A. P. P. on 3rd May 1951 in New Delhi, "should have agreed to the inclusion of Kashmir in Pakistan as undeniably Kashmir has a Muslim majority. It should have been done at the same time as partition. Had they done it at the same time we would have accepted it and no one would have any quarrel". Thus the occupation of the Valley by the forces of the Indian Union, whatever the plea for doing so, was a clear act of unprovoked and wanton aggression because there was ample justification for the assumption that the State Muslims would, like their co-religionists all over the subcontinent, desire to accede to Pakistan and not to India. Moreover, it was widely known before the occupation took place that all sensible and patriotic non-Muslims in the Valley had every sympathy with the legitimate aspirations of the Kashmir Muslims.

On May 27, 1948, M.N. Roy, leader of the Radical Democratic Party, in a statement put the problem thus :

> "The basic issue is : who is morally as well as legally entitled to settle the fate of Kashmir ? Is it the feudal prince with a very unsavoury reputation, or the people ? The Government of Socialist Nehru has cast its vote for the former. India's right to maintain any army in Kashmir and to wage a war there results from the fact that the Hindu Maharaja decided to accede to India without consultation of the overwhelming Muslim people. *Prima facie* the decision of the Maharaja is invalid........
> The indisputable fact that so few Muslims voted for Congress in the last elections allows the assumption that, given a chance, the Muslim

understand the views of the pro-India and pro-Pakistan elements. But in spite of his strenuous labour and objective approach to the problem he did not succeed in his mission of mediation. He returned to Lake Success by the end of August thoroughly disillusioned and disappointed to report on his failure to the Security Council.

In the report which he submitted on September 19, 1950 Sir Owen Dixon said that "if there was any chance of settling the Kashmir dispute, it lay in partition and in some means of allocating the Kashmir Valley, rather than in an overall plebiscite". The problem, he added, had best be left to be settled between India and Pakistan mutually. After mentioning various plans and proposals that he submitted to the two Governments during the period of his stay in the subcontinent regarding demilitarization and preparation for the plebiscite in the State, Sir Owen Dixon observed in his report. :

> "In the end I became convinced that India's agreement would never be obtained to demilitarization in any such form, or to provisions governing the period of the plebiscite of any such character, as would in my opinion permit of the plebiscite being conducted in conditions sufficiently guarding against intimidation and other forms of influence and abuse, by which the freedom and fairness of the plebiscite might be imperilled".

Sir Owen as a last attempt at settlement prepared a complete plan for a limited plebiscite in the Valley and adjoining areas where the opinion of the people about the accession was said to be in doubt. Writing about this plan he said :

> "I intended to provide that an administrative body consisting of United Nations officers should be set up in the limited plebiscite area. The Plebiscite Administrator would be at the head of the body. The body would carry on the functions of government in the area until the poll was declared. It would not be the body's function to form new policies but to carry on the administration of Government in the area. I intended that the administrative body of United Nations officers should have power, if they thought fit to do so, to exclude troops of every description. If, on the other hand, they decided that for any purpose troops were necessary they could request the parties to provide them. In so far as they allowed the views of the two sides to be laid before the people of the limited area, they would have power to secure equality to India and Pakistan in any such right as well as in other respects."

fourteen months, after having carried death and destruction into peaceful homes in Kashmir and after having inflicted a fascist regime of hooligans over the Valley for six long years, the Congress leaders now unabashedly tell the Kashmiris that India being a progressive secular country the State people should, for the sake of their own welfare, willingly accede to it. Could cruel mockery go any further? It is claimed that India is a State founded on principles of secularism, justice and democracy uninfluenced by sectarian or communal considerations; that it upholds the composite nationalism and humanist culture evolved jointly by all the communities, Hindus and non-Hindus alike; that it has set its face against reaction and believes in modernism and progress; that it is bent upon abolition of *jagirdari*, absentee landlordism and all remnants of medievalism; that it is committed to establish social democracy; and that it will end all kinds of exploitation. Therefore Kashmir State which is also populated by various communities, though dominated by Muslims, and has a similar culture can in the interest of harmony, peace, progress and freedom fittingly form a part of the Indian Republic.

This is something which demands unbiased investigation. Fanatics among Muslims and power-hungry politicians of pro-Pakistan parties in the State might like to see Kashmir joining Pakistan at any cost, fighters for freedom and democracy, among whom I humbly consider myself to be one, cannot adopt that irrational and unpatriotic attitude. To all Kashmiris the freedom of Kashmir is of paramount importance. All other problems including the accession issue,are secondry and of lesser consequence. They seek a solution of the accession dispute that will lead them nearer to the goal of freedom. Their ideal is the establishment of a social democracy in Kashmir. They want to end all exploitation of man by man. Above all they want to attain a higher stage in the development of Kashmir culture. They do not believe in any distinction of caste or creed. Secularism alone can lead them towards their destination. If therefore the claims of the Congress leaders are well-founded and if Pakistan is really a theocracy there is not a shadow of doubt

that despite the betrayal of the Nationalists and the unprovoked aggression of the Government of India it will be in the best interests of the State that it should accede to the Republic of India. No patriot, no democrat and no fighter for freedom worth the name can stand against that proposal. But to arrive at a sound decision we shall have to find out if India is secular and progressive and what truth there is in the charge that Pakistan is a theocratic and a reactionary State.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

IS INDIA A SECULAR STATE?

"I can say without the slightest hesitation and yet in all humility that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means...

"Thus it will be seen that for me there are no politics devoid of religion. They subserve religion. Politics bereft of religion are a death-adder because they kill the soul." —**Mahatma Gandhi.**

EVERY Congressman in India indeed every Hindu firmly asserts that India is a secular State and that people of all castes and creeds living in this country enjoy equal freedom. As a proof the Hindus profusely quote the resolutions of the Congress and the provisions of the constitution which India adopted in February 1950. But it is neither the professions of the leaders nor the word of law that makes a country secular. It is what actually obtains in a society, the actual treatment with different sections of people, that make it secular or religion-ridden.

To decide whether India is entitled to be called a secular state built on the foundations of non-communal composite nationalism we shall first discuss the problem of culture. Almost all the Hindu leaders holding exalted and high positions in the Congress heirarchy, in the Government of India and in the provincial spheres of Authority, have, time and again, expressed their opinions on this subject and left no ambiguity about the fact that they are determined to revive and rejuvenate the ancient Brahminic culture. They have gone even further and said that in future India only this culture will and must predominate. Purushottam Das Tandon, ex-President of the Congress, went so far as to assert in a largely attended public meeting in Jubbalpore on the first anniversary of independence (15th August, 1948):

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> "There should not be any more talk of separate culture and language in the Indian Union. There should be no room for such persons in the Indian Union who advocate separate culture and separate language for a particular community. Such people cannot change their outlook and pledge their unstinted loyalty to the Indian Union. They should quit India and sooner they do so the better for them and India......If Muslims are anxious to stay in the Indian Union which is a secular State they will have to adopt Hindi as their language and Devanagri as their script. ......Muslims in India will have to win the confidence of their fellow countrymen and Government not by words but by deeds. They must stop looking to Pakistan for inspiration and make India's culture their own."

In this vehement assertion Tandon is not alone. He epitomises the Congress rank and file ; only he is a little more frank and outspoken than the rest. Prof. Yashwant Rai, another Congress leader, demanded in the Indian Parliament on 18th March, 1949 :

> "The present education system which is mainly based on western ideologies should be overhauled and ancient culture re-introduced. If we want to have one culture, one language and one country, we will have to keep one ideology—our ancient ideology."

Some of the Congress leaders when embarrassed by questions of critics frequently offer abstruse enunciations and round-about definitions regarding culture. No one should be misled by these. To understand what Tandon and other Congress leaders mean by culture we should not only closely sift their speeches and statements on the issue but also observe and examine their doings in every day life. We shall then find out the reality that they are determined to revive ancient Brahminism and thrust it down the throats of Hindus and non-Hindus alike in independent India. For, Tandon's alarming declaration is not a vain threat ; it is being steadily implemented with vigour all over the Republic.

Let us take the case of *lingua franca* to which Tandon referred. Hindi (in the opinion of many Congress leaders Sanskritised Hindi) with Devanagri script is to be the National language of India before 1965. It is well-known that more than 60% of the Hindus and almost all non-Hindus do not know the language, cannot speak it and much less can write in it. In

the words of N. V. Gadgil, ex-Minister Government of India, Hindi today is admittedly a provincial language and there are other provincial languages far richer in literature.[1] As regards the script Narayana Menon, a learned professor of the Banaras University, has stated in a pamphlet that it is the most erratic of all the scripts, its hands and feet proceed in all directions like an octopus and it is not capable of easy writing. In the south Hindus have continuously felt bitter over forcible introduction of Hindi in that vast area. They have been up against it and hundreds of South Indians have willingly suffered imprisonment in the recent past for protesting and despairingly defying law in this connection. But such is the religious and revivalist zeal of those who talk glibly about composite nationalism, democracy and secular state that they are determined to foist the language and the script upon reluctant people because it is assumed that Hindus have, or should have, deep religious, sentimental ties with Hindi, the eldest daughter of Sanskrit, the language in which Hindu holy scriptures are written.

Before the attainment of independence the Congress and its leaders believed that neither Hindi nor Urdu but Hindustani in both Devanagri and Persian scripts could be the national language as it represented the blend of the two great cultures and expressed the true composite national culture of India. In his weekly journal *The Harijan* Mahatma Gandhi wrote on 10th August, only five days before India became independent :

> "The Congress must stand firm like a rock. It dare not give way on the question of the *lingua franca* of India. It cannot be Persianised Urdu or Sanskritised Hindi. It must be a beautiful blend of the two simple forms written in either script. Let us not turn away from the Urdu script."

But when the matter came up before the Constituent Assembly all those Congress leaders who swear by the composite national culture, secularism and the greatness of the Mahatma and his teachings, in utter disregard of the declarations of the Congress decided to adopt Hindi with Devanagri script as the national

[1] Speech in Indian Parliament on 13th September, 1949.

language of India. In vain did the non-Hindu members, including the Congress Muslims, plead with them that Hindustani in both scripts as the national language alone will bring about the fusion of cultures for the ultimate good and prosperity of India. Maulana Azad felt so much dejected that in anguish he described the outlook as "intolerant, communal and narrow" with which the question was approached and decided.

The revivalist zeal in adopting Hindi as the *lingua franca* does not end here. If personal desires of certain big Congress leaders are any guide, some day Sanskrit itself might become the national language of India. The then Bihar Congress Governor, M. S. Aney, presiding over the 5th session of U. P. Teachers Conference wistfully expressed his mind in Lucknow thus :

> "Sanskrit is the cultural language of India. It has occupied the position for thousands of years and has been the unifying force holding together the various cults, creeds and faiths in India. Sanskrit should be given a place of honour in the educational and cultural activities in the Dominion."

Govind Ballabh Pant, Chief Minister of United Provinces, was more outspoken and practical too in this behalf. Addressing the convention meeting of the Government Sanskrit College in Banaras in 1949 he said :

> " Independence has thrown great responsibilities on our shoulders and one of the foremost of these is the revival of the Sanskrit education. Sanskrit is the rock on which the edifice of Indian culture is built, and so long as Sanskrit is not lost there is no danger of India losing her soul. Sanskrit was once the *lingua franca* not only of India but also of distant countries like Malaya and Indo-China."

The U. P. Premier declared in the meeting that his Government had decided to start a Sanskrit University in Banaras very soon. In the same meeting Acharya Nirendra Dev, Socialist leader, appealed to the audience that "Sanskrit should once again occupy the pre-eminent position it once held." The wish of the former and the inference to be drawn from the suggestion of the latter are quite manifest. But let us proceed further.

That sea-green incorruptible Nationalist, Dr. K. N. Katju, Home Minister, Government of India, unhesitatingly and openly preached what these Congress leaders had only hinted at. In

his convocation address at the Nagpur University in 1949 he pleaded for the adoption of Sanskrit as the national language of India. And how was this object to be achieved? In the right fascist manner Katju, then a provincial satrap, suggested:

> "It is obvious that the adoption of English as a national language is out of question. Experience showed that a State language might come to existence if it was rigidly enforced by the ruling authority. In existing conditions we may witness such a consummation if the Central and the Provincial Governments take united action to enforce the use of one particular language throughout India."

Quite recently on 2nd November Dr. Katju in reply to a deputation of the All-Kerala Sanskrit Parishad observed: "Though I do not know Sanskrit I strongly hold the view that it should be made the national language of the country".

These are not the views of the Hindu fanatics, the Jan Sangh, Mahasabha or Ram Rajya Parished leaders. It is the voice of Congress India as represented by its sober and experienced old guard. To these may be added the opinion of Patanjali Shastri, the Chief Justice of India. "If only we realize the importance of Sanskrit for maintenance and propagation of our culture both in this country and abroad it would be a great unifying force," declared the Chief Justice while inaugurating the new Sanskrit classes of the Kuppaswami Shastri Research Institute on January 4, 1953. He added: "I am one of those who look forward to Sanskrit being made the national language at no distant future. I venture to think that despatches and judgments written in Sanskrit will perhaps have more value and will be more attractive than judgments and despatches written in Hindi." Thus the possibility of Sanskrit becoming *lingua franca* of future India at the point of bayonet cannot be entirely ruled out; at any rate the world might witness the mad adventure of Nationalist India reviving an ancient language, dead for verbal communication thousands of years ago, to make it the spoken tongue of four hundred million human beings. Possibly, however, the day is yet far off when serious efforts will be made to give the honoured position of the national language to Sanskrit because some sensible Congressmen can see how disastrous as well as ludicrous such an attempt

will prove. In an article contributed by him to the Press 'not as Prime Minister but as an author' Jawahar Lal Nehru wrote :

> "However great Sanskrit may be and however much we may like to promote its study, as we should, it (Sanskrit) cannot be a living language."

After this frank admission, however, to appease fanatics, Nehru characteristically added : "But it (Sanskrit) must be, as it has been, the base and innèr substance of most of our languages. That is inevitable."

With such encouragement efforts have already started to give the place of honour to Sanskrit in one way or the other. Inaugurating the second term of the Allahabad University Union a responsible educationaist, Dr. Amar Nath Jha, opined that Sanskritised Hindi alone could be the national language of India. This appears to be the common tendency among Hindu scholars and leaders. Commenting on it the special correspondent of *The Statesman* in its issue of 26th February, 1950, observed :

> "The purists swear by Sanskrit, but the Sanskrit they inject into the language is such as would not be understood by even the Pandits themselves; for the simple word they want to substitute a more difficult one; for the obvious Sanskrit alternative they go in for a more unfamiliar derivative; for a wholesome single word they must go in for a compound word, for what is not available they must manufacture another."

What is the result of all this madness ? Let a Punjabi Hindu, Mohan Lal Kashyap, speak :

> "It grieves me to express my indignation at the display of language fanaticism in certain parts of India. I love Hindi and am acquainted with its literature extensively for I learned both Hindi and Sanskrit from childhood. Recently in a motor vehicles licensing office in Lucknow, I had to go from one forbidding name plate to another without finding out where I could obtain forms. One can imagine the plight of villagers in such an office. You cannot thrust a language on the people".

And yet Sanskritised Hindi in Devanagri script must be thrust upon unwilling people, Hindus and non-Hindus alike, in every possible way. Mr. R.R.Diwakar, then Minister for Information and Broadcasting, addressing the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Kotah in December 1950 defended the Government's attitude in regard to language controversy. He had however to admit publicly that .

"My ministry has been receiving numerous complaints from people that the language of All India Radio is not intelligible to them and hence they have to listen to the news bulletins of Radio Pakistan, whose language they are able to follow without difficulty."

As a result of this crusade, it is hardly surprising that orphaned Urdu in independent India is deliberately relegated to the background to be finally smothered. For centuries Urdu has enjoyed a deserved position of honour, by right of its intrinsic merit, in Central and Northern India. It has nothing to do with any religious community or class of people. "Urdu is not a Muslim language. It is not spoken in any of the countries where Islam is or has been the religion of the majority of the people. Urdu belongs to the Aryan branch of languages, its basic structure, grammar and the greater part of its vocabulary is Indian", says Dr Syed Mahmud, the eminent Congress leader of Behar. He adds: "Both Hindus and Mussalmans have used it for centuries. Before the use of English by educated classes, Urdu was the *lingua franca* of India. It is indeed a mixture of languages. In its 55,000-word vocabulary, 12,000 are of purely Hindi stock, and the remaining 13,000 belong to Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, English and other languages". Urdu has been owned for hundreds of years by all the communities in India in equal affection and esteem. The distinguished Nationalist leader late Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru used to say that Urdu was the precious heritage that all Indians had inherited from their forefathers. Innumerable Hindus have spontaneously contributed to its literature in both elegant prose and sweet poetry which is universally acknowledged as classics. Many of them continue to do so even today. Urdu journals edited by Hindus are widely circulated in the Indian Republic and are vastly read. But in their misdirected zeal to wipe out this supposed relic of Muslim culture in India drastic measures are being adopted in the secular State to replace commonly understood Urdu by unfamiliar Sanskritised Hindi. Already in Behar, U.P., M.P., and Rajasthan where Urdu flourished in the past and is easily understood and talked by the great bulk of the people Hindi has been adopted as the court language and medium of instruction in schools In Madhya Bharat the use of any language

other than Hindi in Devanagri script by a Government servant is treated as an offence making him or her liable to be fined or dismissed according to the provisions of Madhya Bharat Hindi Bill of 1949. In East Punjab the Government passed orders early in 1949 that the use of Urdu should be immediately discontinued. It had been banished from the government schools a year earlier. In Amritsar shopkeepers were asked in a public meeting presided by Lakshmi Narain Sahu, a Congress leader, to have their signboards only in Hindi and Gurmukhi. In U. P. numerous officials have been removed for not knowing Hindi. Scenes comic if they were not also tragic are enacted in the U.P. Legislature when nembers cannot comprehend the text of Bills in Hindi drafted by qualified masters of the language. "Even in your own province of the U.P. some ministers introduced writing office notes in Hindi", disclosed Dr Pattabhi Seetaramayya, the then Congress President, in a Press Conference on 11th October, 1948, "but the practice had to be given up in less than a week, although the U.P. is a homogeneous province and all the ministers are Hindi knowing people. If that is the position in the U. P. what could we expect at the Centre ? " Yet it is insisted upon by the indefatigable crusaders in the cause of ancient Hindu culture that only Hindi shall have to be used and no other language. If it is evident to the fanatics that Urdu cannot be easily replaced by Hindi, preference is given to the foreign English language over Urdu. In Hyderabad the High Court and other courts subordinate to it were made to conduct their work in English on and from 26th January 1950, the day on which the new Indian Constitution came into force. The court language previously was Urdu.

Having failed to secure an all India status for Urdu the admirers of the language made attempts to get it recognised as a regional language. Dr Zakir Hussain, President of the *Anjuman-i-Tarraqqi-i-Urdu*, submitted a petition in December 1951 to the President of India for the purpose. Early in 1953 a movement was launched by the *Anjuman* to consolidate the efforts by securing, chiefy in U.P., more than two million sig-

natures to a memorial demanding that Urdu should be recognised as a regional language. But when the Executive Council of the U. P. Congress Committee met on 6th July it stuck to its earlier decision that Hindi alone would be recognised as the State language. Speaking about the demand a few days later on 17th July Nehru in a Press Conference declared that "wherever there was a demand for learning that language all facilities should be provided but it was impossible to have it as the official language due to administrative and other complications".

This so far as the question of *lingua franca* is concerned. As a vital part of culture the national anthem is of no less importance than the national language. A national song is the collective expression of the deep sentiments of a people. As such a melodious and a sweet song comprehensible and lovable to even the humblest and the dullest among them can only fittingly become the national anthem of a country. India has *Jana Gana Mana* as its national song with *Bande Matram* as its equivalent. The former is in Bengali which very few non-Bengali Indians can understand and the latter is a poetic piece in Sanskrit abounding in Hindu mythological images and full of idolatrous sentiments highly objectionable in the eyes of the monotheistic Muslims. The context in the book wherefrom *Bande Matram* has been culled is very unhappy. Besides it can hardly be understood outside the class of scholars in Sanskrit even among Hindus. The first stanza of *Jana Gana Mana* as translated by Poet Tagore himself says :

> "—thou art the ruler of the minds of all people
> —thou dispenser of India's destiny.
> —thy name rouses the hearts of the Punjab, Sind,
> —Gujrat and Maratha, of Dravid, Orissa, and Bengal".

There is no mention of Kashmir. It is interesting to note that in consideration of India's new geographical boundary Sind has been replaced by Kamrup (Assam) in the original text.

For many years prior to the independence of India when the country was under British imperial domination and had not yet earned the honour of being a secular State, Congress had owned, along with *Jana Gana Mana* and *Bande Matram*, Doctor Iqbal's sweet, passionately nationalistic and deeply

moving song *Sare Jahan Se Achha* as one of the national anthems. It has been altogether discarded now. Its language is so simple and charming that the people in Northern and Central India easily understand and appreciate it. Yet those talking vociferously about their secular state and advocating composite nationalism consider it sinful to recite *Sare Jahan Se Achha,* any more in India on the Congress platform or at any public functions and festivals, obviously because it is in Urdu and has been composed by a Muslim poet.

In connection with the matter of culture a brief reference may also be made to the sign on tri-colour National Flag of India. It is called *Dharma Chakra,* a symbol of ancient Hindu culture and religion. It was adopted with the approval of scholars of Hindu scriptures as a sign of great religious significance. Quite justifiably feeling elated at this trend of events V. D. Savarkar, the well-known Hindu communalist leader, inaugurating the 28th session of the All India Hindu Mahasabha at Calcutta, observed :

> "It is a matter of great pleasure to all that the flag of freedom is flying over Bharat Varsha today. Call it a secular flag if you like but it is at the same time our Hindu flag. There is that Asoka Chakra inscribed on it."

Again ; in the Indian Republic cow slaughter is being increasingly banned and even penalised in different parts. Suggestions and demands are regularly appearing in the Congress Press that it should be rigorously stopped and penalised throughout the country. Such a proposal was made in the Constituent Assembly. Feeble voices are raised on good grounds by rational and healthier minds against such a measure. One such voice was of Rev. J. M. Nichols Roy, a Congress Minister of Assam, who speaking on the subject in the Constituent Assembly on November 19, 1949, said :

> "It will not be economic at all to prevent the slaughter of cows under all circumstances. If it means total prohibition, that will be a blot (on the Constitution) and an oppression to some people, especially to the hill people who eat beef and raise cattle for the purpose. It will also be an oppression to people who slaughter cows in sacrifice. Even the Hindu Gurkhas in Assam sacrifice buffaloes at the time of Durga Puja."

But fanaticism is so rampant that unmindful of the consequences for the agriculture and economy of the country and

in utter disregard of the non-Hindu opinion and sentiment, several Municipal Committees have issued fiats prohibiting cow slaughter and the sale of beef. When the Cantonment Board, Jabbulpore, banned cow slaughter and sale of beef on July 1, 1949, Muslims, Anglo-Indians and Christians protested against the order imploring to revise the Board's resolution as its implementation would cause them considerable hardship because majority of them subsisted on beef for economic reasons. Needless to say that the protest fell on deaf ears. In their over-enthusiasm members of the Bahraich Municipal Board framed by-laws prohibiting slaughter of other animals as well besides cows. When the Commissioner disapproved this decision of the Board all Hindu members resigned in protest.

The demand of ban on cow slaughter became so pressing that the Indian Constituent Assembly has included it as one of the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution for independent India. As the debate in the Assembly on this subject manifestly displayed this was done not on any consideration of the improvement of agriculture and livestock—considerations which were repeatedly advocated by members holding the opposite view—but solely because cow is sacred in the eyes of Hindus and their sentiments were to be respected. A committee appointed by the Government of India to enquire into this matter, euphemistically called the Cattle Protection and Preservation Committee, has recommended that "slaughter of cows is not desirable in India in any circumstances whatsoever and that its prohibition should be enforced by law". The Committee suggested that the law prohibiting cow slaughter be totally enforced as earlier as possible but in any case within two years of the enactment of legislation. It suggested further a survey of the country for building *go-sadans*, 'cow homes' and the preparation of details of expenditure involved and enactment of legislation for raising funds by special cess for the maintenance and care of unserviceable and unproductive animals. So in India before long not only will cow slaughter be banned but all people —Hindus, Muslims, Christians—will be forced by law to pay

for the maintenance and preservation of unwanted, valueless and unproductive cows because Hindus feel sentimental about it and have religious reverence for the animal.

The Rajasthan Government has already banned killing of or causing serious injury to cows in the State. By a law called the Rajasthan Preservation of Animals Act the Government has prescribed punishment extending to ten years imprisonment and a fine for those found guilty of killing cows, bulls or calves, and persons causing serious injury to them would be punished with imprisonment up to seven years or fine or both.

What disastrous consequences are bound to follow the foolish banning of cow slaughter may be imagined from the following observations made by the Tanners Federation of India in a memorandum to the Government :

> During the past few months there has been a shortage of raw hides which has now become acute. The shortage is, to a great extent, due to the anti-cow slaughter agitation whereby an estimated number of some 120 million unproductive and useless cattle are allowed to wander around instead of being put to commercial use ; also to the non-availability of raw hides from Pakistan."

No one can deny the deep and age-old reverence of the Hindus for the cow. Rightly or wrongly they hold the animal in highest respect and regard. It is futile to argue against so deep-rooted a sentiment. But one should have thought that in a secular State the rights of other communities and the interests of the country are not entirely ignored and legislation is not passed on such subjects by the force of brute majority.

Another instance of such high handedness in the secular State is the fiat which has been issued to the Christian missionaries. Dr Katju, Home Minister, revealed in the House of the People on 21st April, 1953 that "it had been made clear to all foreign missionaries working in the country that if they indulged in proselytism it would be undesirable and that this was the basic rule governing the Government's attitude." Only some time earlier Nehru addressing a Christian gathering on the occasion of St. Thomas celebrations had said : "Various

religions, creeds and faiths that exist in India are as much of India as any other, and we are all partners and sharers of that great inheritance...The fact that a religion or truth comes from another country does not make it foreign. Truth is truth wherever it might be". The decision against the spread of Christian faith therefore, to say the least, is obscurantist and exposes the real nature of Indian nationalism. It shows the hollowness of the claim that India is secular, accepts the truth from whatever quarter it comes and believes in the fusion of different cultures. It is not surprising that leaders of the Indian Christian community were perturbed by this declaration of the Government of India."National considerations should not claim any monopoly in the realm of the spiritual," protested nine prominent Christian leaders of India in a joint statement on May 14, 1953. "We should ceaselessly examine all spiritual truth from whatever quarter it comes and thus be guided to that reality which will be creative and abiding. In such a spiritual quest fear should have no place at all. Furthermore we wish to point out that such an unreasonable demand cuts at the very nerve of missionary work of all religions. If the declaration of Dr. Katju is correct, then he should be the first to admit that India committed the greatest blunder in its history when its sons and daughters went about spreading Buddhism in all the lands of South East Asia". Cardinal Gracias reminded Nehru of his statement on the day of St. Thomas celebrations and confessed that he found it hard to understand the outburst of Dr. Katju against the evangelical work of the foreign missionaries. He made a fervent appeal to the leaders of India to review the decision. But so far all these protests and appeals have gone in vain. But let us proceed on.

The spirit of revivalism in India is manifest in giving a name to the country. It is no longer Hindusthan, a name that had become popular during the past centuries. The secularists had to resort to *Puranas* to find out the ancient name of Bharat which has been incorporated in the Constitution. The revivalists are not content with changing the name of the country ; they want to change the names of the towns and streets also in the

big cities. When this mania became widespread protests were raised by saner sections. The Bombay Historical Society opposed the changes and described it as "vandalism and perversion of historical monuments". The Society in a resolution stated that in the past roads were named after personalities who were "instrumental in the development of the city, or in some praiseworthy action beneficial to the city." Expressing "strong disapproval" in particular, at the move to rename Sandhurst Road after the late Swami Dayanand Sarswati, the resolution said that Lord Sandhurst, after whom the road was named, was the Governor during whose regime the Improvement Trust was established."The Trust", ran the resolution, "effected a tremendous amount of improvements in the health and appearance of the city and raised it to its present level as the first city in the East. Swami Dayanand Sarswati had nothing to do either with the development or general welfare of the city".

These are some facts concerning the important problems of culture. But the programme of revivalism of the Congress leaders does not exhaust itself with the national language, the national anthem, the national flag, the banning of cow slaughter and renaming of the streets. It goes far beyond and embraces all aspects of Hindu religion till culture and religion become identical. If we wade through the mass of information, which is available, of the sayings and doings of the leaders in the Central and Provincial Governments we can produce hundreds of instances to show that they are devoted and determined to revive Brahminism in every shape and form. The scope of this book forbids to cite all such instances. To know the trend and arrive at the truth mention of only a few will suffice.

On August 15, 1947 when the British Government transferred power into the hands of the Congress the charge of the administration was assumed by the Socialist Nehru at the unusual hour of midnight in accordance with the instructions of Hindu astrologers. As of yore, Brahmins were present with all the required paraphernalia and performed the *puja* as ordained. In May 1948 Nehru launched the first Indian built steam-ship at the Vizigapattam Port.The ceremony was held in accordance

with Hindu religious rituals, Nehru being the chief participant. In Jamshedpore Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the then Minister of Industries, performed the inaugural ceremony of the first Indian manufactured steam-roller. It was preceded with religious rites and after performing *puja* the Minister made a *Swastika* mark with vermilion on the roller. In the beginning of 1949 the then Minister for Food and Agriculture, Jairam Das Daulatram, performed *Ganesh puja* before inaugurating Government land reclamation schemes at Patharia and Piparia, villages in the Central Provinces. In July every year the *Van Mahotsava* (Tree Plantation Ceremony) is performed all over India by the members of the Congress Governments and in every case *puja* is performed before trees are planted. In Delhi last year Dr Rajendra Prasad, the President, barefooted and dressed in *dhoti* and *achkan* and amidst chanting of *mantras*, planted a sapling—preferably *Tulsi* plant with religious merit—near Mahatma Gandhi's *samadhi*.

In order to demonstrate that the Hindu rule was reborn in India after the attainment of independence, the Congress leaders decided to repair and renovate some of the famous ancient temples. On November 13, 1947 Sardar Patel took a vow not to rest till the Somnath Temple in Gujrat associated with the name of the Muslim conqueror, Mahamud Gazni, was reconstructed. Preparations started forthwith. The machinery of the secular State was utilised for the purpose.

According to an agreement between the U. P. Congress Government and the Indian Sugar Syndicate six annas out of the price of every maund of sugar were being collected by the Syndicate for the renovation of the Somnath Temple. And so indirectly all Hindus and non-Hindus, monotheists, polytheists and atheists have been paying this religious levy in the twentieth century to the Government of the secular State of India, for the rebuilding of an ancient Hindu shrine.

When everything was ready and the time came to lay the foundations of the temple instructions were issued to the Indian Ambassadors all over the world to collect material for the religious ceremony which would accompany the laying of the foundations. For instance the High Commissioner for India in

Australia, K.S. Duleep Singh Ji, was asked to send 'water from the southern ocean at Auckland (Newzealand), water from Australia's river Murry, twigs of vegetation from the Australian and the Newzealand Alps and a bit of soil from Newzealand and from Australia's capital, Canberra"

On May 11, 1951 amidst chanting of hymns Dr. Rajendra Prashad, President of the secular State of India, installed the *Jyotilingam* in partly reconstructed temple of Somnath. As the ceremony began guns boomed and fired 101 salvoes, the traditional crimson and *kesri* flag fluttered in the breeze and thousand voices raised the cry *"Har Har Mahadev, Jai Somnath"*.

On 30th January 1949, the first death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the ministers, officials and Government House staff at New Delhi were among a gathering at night in Government House at which *bhajans* and *kirtans* were sung, *the function held round a bust of the Mahatma* which had been presented to Mr. Rajgopalacharia in Calcutta by a Bengali artist.

In May 1950 a temple enshrining the life-size marble statues of Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba was opened by Pandit Pant, Chief Minister of U.P., on the Municipal Hall Grounds at Banaras. Such statues of the Mahatma have been erected in innumerable places in India and everywhere the ceremony of religious significance for the people was performed as an integral part of the political life of the country and since the advent of independence as part of State functions.

On January 14, 1951, in Calcutta, amidst the blowing of conches and chanting of *mantras* by hundreds the sacred relics of Saripatta and Maha Moggallana, the two disciples of Lord Buddha, were handed over by Nehru on behalf of the Government of India to late Shyama Prashad Mookerjee, the president of the Maha Bodhi Society of India. The relics were the two pieces of bones of the two great religious teachers. Prior to handing over they had been kept for some days in the throne room of the Government House where they were worshipped. Dr Mookerjee receiving the sacred charge said : "We look upon a sacred occas-

sion like this as the beginning of an era of revival of India's ancient culture".

It is not entirely inconceivable, though it looks like so at present, that at a future date, may be near or distant. the non-Hindu ministers of the Congress governments might also be expected to perform such ceremonies and rites on the plea that they are a part of Indian culture and have nothing to do with religion.

Be that as it may; from the foregoing it will be clear that however presumptuous the claim of the Congress leaders and Hindus in general that they are determined to establish a secular State what they are actually successful in doing in practice is the creation of a Hindu State with the avowed object of the revival of ancient Brahminic culture. For those who have keenly and critically studied the developments of Gandhian Nationalism this is not a matter for surprise ; nor is this unexpected. Ever since Mahatma Gandhi appeared on the Indian scene this tendency towards revivalism has been discernible and increasingly gaining momentum. Only people who do not possess the faculty to discriminate and who accept every slogan and statement uncritically can be made to believe that India with its present policies and programmes is or can become a secular State. So long as the Congressmen do not discard the habit of looking backwards and deriving inspiration solely from past ages, the chances of replacing the present set-up by a healthier political, social and economic structure are very slender. In any case the reality cannot be overlooked that in India today any cultural pattern other than the Brahminism can find little or no scope to exist much less to thrive. Even the composite culture born of the intermingling of different communities in social, economic and other spheres and reinforced by the impact of modern technological progress, scientific advancement and philosophical ideas on Indian conditions seems to be doomed.

Answering the question "why did we demand Pakistan and why did we strive for it ?" posed by himself Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, in his convocation ad-

dress to the students of the Punjab University delivered on January 22, 1949 said :

> "Was it because some individuals wanted power or wealth or position ? Was it because it was intended that one group should dominate the other and get all benefits or that the common man's life is to be the same drudgery of poverty,hunger and one long continued frustration from the cradle to the grave? If this were so it would be justifiable to say that we have made all our sacrifices in vain. But it is most emphatically not so. The life that previous students of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent entered on leaving the University was the life of a people who were not only striving for political freedom but also facing an acute internal conflict arising out of a clash of divergent cultures. This internal conflict not only stood in the way of the attainment of freedom, but threatened to poison the very fruit of that freedom if it was acquired, for freedom really means, freedom to live and think as we desire. Political freedom without religious, cultural and economic freedom would be meaningless and without value. It was for the sake of this cultural freedom that the Muslims in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent made Pakistan the supreme goal of their political efforts. Pakistan was for them an idea, a religion, a culture, a way of life. It was to have a homeland which we could call our own and in which we could carve out our own destiny, our own traditions, evolve our own culture and practice our own way of life that we strove for attainment of Pakistan".

The ambition and zeal of the Congress leaders to revive the ancient Hindu culture at any cost and risk is tormenting many sections of Indian society and in different parts for diverse reasons. In the East Punjab Sikhs are deeply perturbed and that indefatigable Akali leader, Master Tara Singh, facing grim realities after partition is, oddly enough, following in the footsteps of Jinnah to wrest a tiny part of the Union as a homeland for his virile community, to protect its own culture and religion as also to foster its entity and growth.

An unequivocal declaration that Sikhs refuse to live under Hindu domination and demand a separate State with common defence with India, was made by Master Tara Singh when he addressed the political Akali Conference in October, 1949. He blamed Hindus for communalism and asserted that there was neither nationalism nor democracy in India undet Congress raj. He ridiculed the idea of a secular State and said from personal

experience that in jails people were made to recite '*Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram*' against their will. He said that if there was any order in schools to recite it he would urge Sikh children to revolt against it as they recognised no other deity than God. He complained that Sikhs in Punjab had not suffered so much damage under the Unionist regime for so many years as under two years of Congress rule. He suggested that if two brothers could not pull on well the best course was to divide. Sikhs wanted to protect their culture, religion and traditions. In another meeting in Simla on November 8, 1949 Master Tara Singh said that the slogan of nationalism and secularism is a cloak to crush the minorities. The Akalis, it may be noted, rejected the Constitution of India when it was framed and boycotted the nationalist celebrations when it was introduced on 26th January, 1950.

Addressing the annual general meeting of the Anglo-Indian Association in September 1950 Mr Frank Anthony, M.P., a great admirer of Congress leaders, observed :

> "In spite of the safeguards extended to our community in the Constitution, there is widespread anxiety in the minds of Anglo-Indians throughout the country. I cannot give an unqualified assurance that all Anglo Indians will be treated fairly. In some of the States policies are becoming more and more communal and reactionary. An unfortunate feature at present is that while members of the majority community can openly preach intolerant communal policies which are applauded and received with acclamation, any member of a minority community who protests against these trends is dubbed a communalist."

Nationalism in India has surely come to mean unqualified support to the communalism of Hindus.

Laying the foundation stone of Ambedkar Bhawan in New Delhi Dr B.R. Ambedkar, the then Law Minister of India, charged the Congress Government with "letting down the Scheduled Castes". He said :

> "I have painfully to say that our people have not got the measures of protection under the National Government of free India which they had enjoyed under the British rule... People say that we have got freedom, but I do not admit that we, the scheduled caste people, have got freedom. I have little hope that we would get freedom in any forseeable future."

IS INDIA A SECULAR STATE ?

As for the Muslims let the well known Indian Socialist leader Jai Prakash Narain speak :

> "The Muslim population has been so much cowed and demoralised that they are not acting according to their convictions. They are afraid that if they express their real feelings their loyalty will be suspected".

To this may be added the testimony of another experienced and pro-Congress statesman, Sir Mirza Ismail. He wrote :

> "The Muslims in India feel that they are not receiving the treatment due to them as citizens of a secular State which is embodying a chapter on fundamental rights in its Constitution".

Some of the Congress leaders themselves are becoming increasingly aware of this danger of communalism and revivalism. In a statement which he issued to the Press on the eve of the Nasik Congress, Pandit Nehru had to admit :

> "Ever since the partition the spirit of communalism and a certain revivalism have been encouraged in India. Organisations which dared not preach them in earlier years now flaunt them in public and even challenge the very basis of our Constitution. What is more distressing is the fact that the spirit of communalism and revivalism has gradually invaded the Congress and sometimes even affects Government policy".

That the Congress leaders are profusely issuing statements as a matter of habit and delivering speeches advocating secularism in politics and that their adherents are raising revolutionary slogans, makes the danger of this revivalism more serious which needs to be persistently and intelligently guarded against.

Sensing the danger of cultural annihilation of Indian Muslims in the atmosphere already described the Pakistan delegation to the Paris Session of the U. N. General Assembly proposed that the list of human fundamental rights should include the protection from cultural genocide. It is generally feared by helpless Muslims in India and outside that if the short-sighted Hindu leaders will have their way before long Indian followers of Islam will remain Mussalman only in name. The policy pursued by the Congress governments will convert them to the cult of Brahminism. This appeared to be the genesis of the Pakistan

proposal. Evidently it was unexceptionable. But significantly the Indian delegation opposed it.

It is stated that India is building composite nationalism born of the fusion of different cultures; that it is also discouraging communalism in every shape or form. This is taken to be a proof of the country being secular in essence. But as facts show there is nothing of this sort, What is being actually aimed at is the suppression of the voice of non-Hindus, which is dubbed communalism. When it is the question of Hindu communalism the Congress leaders and Congress governments find themselves unable and helpless to do anything. The Central Government of India decided that there should be no denominational institutions in the coutry. It therefore instructed the Hindu University of Banaras and Muslim University cf Aligarh to drop Hindu and Muslim adjectives from their names. Before the management of the Muslim University could decide what to do the conductors of the Hindu University, all nationalists of the deepest hue, refused to abide by the instructions. But while the Government orders were still fresh, Muslim institutions in the provinces were forced to disappear. In West Bengal, the Islamia College of Calcutta was made to change into Central Calcutta College while institutions meant exclusively for Hindu students such as Vidya Sagar College still function as before. This is not surprising. Being in essence itself a Hindu communal body masquerading as the national organisation, the Congress has spiritual affinity with and deep affection for the Hindu institutions. Fundamentally and in cultural outlook there is little difference between the Congress and Hindu Mahasabha or Jan Sangh. All strive for the revival of reactionary Brahminism. As different political parties hungry for power they may be rivals of each other but spiritually they are akin. The Congress cannot therefore wish ill of any communal Hindu institution. Only non-Hindu and particularly Muslim organisations—and there too those opposed to the Congress and not those that support it such as Momin Conference, Azad Muslim Conference, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, etc.—are anathema.

IS INDIA A SECULAR STATE?

Quite recently on 13th December 1953 Jawaharlal Nehru addressing a public meeting in Calcutta warned the people agianst bringing religion into politics. "If religion is allowed to come into politics", he said, "then communalism will have its sway". At the same time he advised the people of India to follow the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi who has emphatically stated that "for me there are no politics devoid of religion" and that "politics bereft of religion are a death-adder because they kill the soul". How Nehru reconciles his own secularism with the views of the Mahatma it is difficult to say. But there is no doubt that independent India under the Congress leadership follows the religious-minded Gandhi and not the socialist Nehru.

If secularism means that the State and politics should be entirely free from religious bias, we do not surely have it in India.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

SECULARISM AND THEOCRACY

HINDUS of almost all shades of opinion habitually assert that Pakistan is a theocratic State and as such helpless and incompetent to provide safety, security and equal treatment for non-Muslim minorities. "India is a secular State," stressed Jawahar Lal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, while discussing supplementary proposals in regard to the holding of a plebiscite in Kashmir with Dr Lozano, President of U.N.C.I.P. "the U.N. also are a secular organisation. Pakistan aims at being a theocratic State". This point has been uttered so repeatedly and so vehemently by the Congress leaders that many have come to believe it as a self-evident fact. In order that we may be able to arrive at the truth we have to correctly define what is meant by the terms secularism and theocracy. Having done so we can easily find out if India is entitled to being called a secular State in the modern sense and if Pakistan is really a theocratic State.

Before giving the historic and accepted definitions of the two terms it would be interesting to know how the eminent Congress leaders define secularism of which they are the great champions. There is a mass of literature on the subject. But we shall quote the sayings of only the most important two leaders. Speaking at Godhra (Gujrat) on February 13, 1949, Nehru advised a big gathering of people on the banks of Meshvi that the secular character of the Indian State must be maintained at any cost. He explained that "this did not mean they were to be irreligious or a nation of athiests". A secular State in his opinion only meant that "an individual in it was free to profess any faith he chose and no disability should rest on him by reason of his faith". In his convocation address at the Aligarh University on February 20, 1949 Maulana Abul Kalam Azad emphasising the same point observed that "the

essence of a secular and democratic State is freedom of opportunity for the individual without regard to race, religion, caste or community".

With this definition in view let us see what aims the leaders of Pakistan have set before themselves and the people of that country to build their State. Immediately after the birth of Pakistan on 14th August, 1947, Quaid-e-Azam made a historical pronouncement. "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan", declared Jinnah addressing the members of the Constituent Assembly and through them the people of Pakistan. "You may belong to any religion, caste or creed ; that has nothing to do with the business of the State. We are starting with the fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State. We should keep that before us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims not in the religious sense because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State". Can anything be more clear, unambiguous and unequivocal ?

Again, in a speech broadcast on the Radio Pakistan soon after concluding the Minority Pact between India and Pakistan early in 1950, Liaquat Ali Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, observed :

> "I want to make it clear that every Pakistani is entitled to the same rights and privileges, irrespective of caste or creed to which he belongs. The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan has amply declared this fact through its Objectives Resolution. Some non-Muslims who are enemies of Pakistan say that since we, in Pakistan, want to have an Islamic State there is no place for non-Muslims here. Nothing could be more misleading and more false than this propaganda. In my speeches I have repeatedly said that we want to build Pakistan on the foundations of Islamic principles of equality, fraternity and social justice. We want to set up a social order in which every person, Muslim or non-Muslim will not only enjoy the fruit of his labour, but will have the satisfaction that complete justice will be done to him in all circumstances. In such a social set up every person will have the right of equality. In Pakistan the minorities are entitled to the same rights and privileges as any other sec-

tion of Pakistanis. The protection of the minorities and their progress is our sacred duty."

Leaders of Pakistan believe that there is nothing contradictory or incongruous in the highest conception of democracy and the basic teachings of Islam. The latter do not in any way fall short of the former. Indeed they contend that the Islamic ideal is an advance on the modern democracy in so far as the problem of morality is concerned. Therefore, they say, nobody need be scared away by the declarations of Pakistan leaders that they are determined to establish a Muslim State with the ideal of Islamic democracy before them. "Nobody need be afraid," stated Tamiz-ud-Din Khan, President of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, in a public speech at Mymensingh in January 1949, "because Islamic constitution meant and stood for the highest principles of equality, fraternity and brotherhood. An Islamic constitution resented discriminations between man and man on grounds of race, colour or for any other cause and which were to be found in several of the so-called civilized States of today". Similar views have been expressed by other leaders of the Muslim League during the past. "Of all the greatest blessings which Islam has brought to the world equality of men is one", said Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din in a public meeting at Lahore on 30th March 1949 when he was the Governor General of Pakistan. He added : "Islam makes no distinction between race, colour, caste or creed. The greatest proof of toleration in Islam is that there is not a single Muslim country in the world where there are no minorities and where they have not been in a position to develop their religion and culture with full freedom. Therefore the minorities in Pakistan should remove from their minds all suspicions and misgivings about the future constitution of Pakistan. The building of our State on Islamic principles does not mean that the rights of non-Muslims will be ignored because interference in the freedom of minorities will by itself be an un-Islamic act. I therefore assure the minorities that they will be at full liberty to practise their religion, safeguard it and promote their culture like free men and with full freedom".

Emphasising the same point in the course of his speech while moving the Objectives Resolution in the Constituent Assembly Liaquat Ali Khan said : "In our desire to build up an Islamic society we have not ignored the rights of the non-Muslims. Indeed it would have been un-Islamic to do so and we would have been guilty of transgressing the dictates of our religion if we had tried to impinge upon the freedom of the minorities. In no way will they be hindered from professing or protecting their religion, or developing their culture. The history of the development of Islamic culture itself shows that the cultures of the minorities who lived under the protection of the Muslim states and empires contributed to the richness of the heritage which the Muslims built up for themselves. I assure the minorities that we are fully conscious of the fact that if the minorities are able to make a contribution to the sum total of human knowledge and thought, it will redound to the credit of Pakistan and will enrich the life of the nation. Therefore the minorities may look forward not only to a period of the fullest freedom, but also to an understanding and appreciation on the part of the majority which has always been such a marked characteristic of Muslims throughout history".

At a civic reception in Abbotabad Ghulam Mohammed, Governor General of Pakistan, observed on 13th May 1953 : "I want Pakistan to live as a Muslim country in the broad sense of working for the welfare and service of the people of all sets of opinion".

Addressing Harijans in Bari Sal (East Bengal) on February 6, 1949 Nazim-ud-Din, the then Governor General of Pakistan, said that although there was equality of opportunity for all in Pakistan, the Government were anxious for the uplift of scheduled castes in economic and educational spheres. He advised them to shed distrust, suspicion and inferiority complex and take their rightful place in national activities. Earlier on February 4 at Gopal Ganj Nazim-ud-Din told the members of the scheduled castes:

"In Pakistan we believe in the equality of man. Nobody is to suffer any disability because of his caste or religion. We are aware of the wrongs

and disabilities from which the scheduled castes have suffered and we shall make special efforts to bring about a speedy improvement in their condition of living and in their education."

We can now ask ; if the definition of secularism given by the Congress leaders be accepted as correct why is not Pakistan entitled to be called a secular State ? True, the leaders of that country call their State an Islamic democracy but if we look at the essence of things there is no difference between India and Pakistan. We must not also forget that Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel and other big Congress leaders have often stated that they want to establish Ram Raj in India which, according to them, is the highest form of democracy the world has ever known. Clearly Pakistan is a secular State according to the definition laid down by the Congress leaders themselves. Whether the leaders of Pakistan are implementing their professions in practice or not is altogether a different matter which will be discussed in a later chapter. At present the question before us is whether or not Pakistan is entitled to be recognised as a secular State in the sense in which the Congress leaders believe India to be a secular State, that is so far as declarations and statements of leaders are concerned. Fairness demands that if India is recognised as a secular State so should be Pakistan.

Pakistan is certainly not a theocratic State. A State is theocratic when political power is held by priests and religious heads as representatives of God. Pakistan is ruled by the elected representatives of the people, howsoever unrepresentative they may be owing to the limited nature of the electorate that elected them. General elections have been held in most of the provinces in Pakistan on the basis of adult franchise. Sooner or later such elections will be held to choose the Parliament of the representatives of the people as well. The present rulers of Pakistan are no religious heads or priests. All of them are as much westernised, if not more, as the leaders of the Government of India. Therefore no reasonable and fair-minded man can call Pakistan a theocratic State by any stretch of imagination. Neither Pakistan nor India is theocratic ; both

are equally secular if measured by the standard laid down by the Congress leaders. The secularism of the Congress and the communalism of the League are not mutually exclusive ideals as most of the people in India are led to believe. In the last analysis both envisage the preponderance or paramountcy of the majority religious community in State politics with legitimate statutory guarantees for the protection of the lives and the safeguard of the interests of the minorities. Religion has been given the same place in social life and politics in both countries. Because of its being secular India does not discourage the practice of religious rituals and observances even at official functions. The same is being done in Pakistan. It was this reality that forced Nehru to compare his own Congress Government with the League Government of Pakistan and the Indian communalist parties such as Jana Sangh, Mahasabha and Ram Rajya Parishad with the fanatic Muslim organisations like Islam League and Majlis-i-Ahrar, when there was a violent anti-Ahmadiya agitation in Pakistan in the beginning of 1953.

But the secularism practised by India and Pakistan is not genuine because it does not entirely divorce politics from religion. The definition of secularism given by the Congress leaders is defective. It is a medieval conception and not a modern one. Secularism has been practised in one form or another throughout the past ages. The history teaches us that it is only when the foundation of a State has been based on secularism that it has prospered. But the noble ideal has undergone changes from time to time and evolved into new and broader shapes. In middle ages politics was closely associated with religion and no one could think of separating them. The religion followed by the ruler was considered to be the State religion. The people who did not follow the State religion suffered several disabilities and were looked upon as inferior to those who were co-religionists of the ruler. No doubt there were enlightened monarchs like Akbar in India and Zain-ul-Abidin Budshah in Kashmir who treated all the people living in their countries on equal terms without any considerations of creed or caste to which they be-

longed. Nevertheless religion was associated with politics. The two rulers did not impose any restrictions on the people who did not follow the State religion but afforded equal opportunities of progress to all. Yet politics and religion were considered inalienable. The secularism preached by the Congress leaders and practised both in India and Pakistan at present is of that pattern. It was doubtless a revolutionary and a progressive ideal in the middle ages. But it cannot be so now. During these intervening centuries human society has witnessed a gigantic change in thought as a result of the progress of science. Today politics must be divorced from religion to make secularism a revolutionary and progressive force. At best the Congress leaders want the State to be equally benevolent and sympathetic towards all the religions and their followers ; they allow the religious base of the State to remain unimpaired. We have already stated what Mahatma Gandhi, father of Indian Nationalism, emphatically said about politics and religion. To him they were inseparables. Speaking in a television programme in London on 3rd November 1952, Dr. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of the Indian Republic, urged a new approach to world problems based on religious principles. He stated that "a new atmosphere was needed in world politics and India had always stood for the religious approach". This is the essence of secularism taught by the Congress leaders. It is a medieval approach. In actual life this antiquated brand of secularism degenerates into communalism of the majority whose leaders happen to be in power. To make secularism real it is imperative that this religious base is totally blasted so that the State, released from the encumbrances of inhibitions, rituals and dogmas, may take long strides towards freedom and progress.

It is claimed that the Congress leaders have given India a secular constitution. I have no desire to minimise the importance of this great achivement. But slogans apart, if the provisions of the constitution are closely scrutinised it will be found that there is no part of it where the protagonists of religion could have a say and have been deprived of it. Even the sections which seem secular in nature are not so in reality. I have referred to the

Directives of State Policy regarding the ban on cow-slaughter. One might have felt gratified that section 27 of the Constitution Act has laid down that the State should not spend any money for the propagation of religion. But the instruction has been modified with the word "specifically" inserted in the body of the section so that the Government can easily spend money out of State exchequer for the propagation of religion in general which will in practice be the Hindu religion. Similarly section 28 of the Constitution Act attempts to lay down the secularist principle that education, a responsibility of the State, should not be contaminated by religious propaganda. But a sub-clause has allowed that such propaganda can be done in schools and colleges with the consent of the pupils and their guardians. Such consent can be taken for granted. Again sub-section 2 of section 30 has enjoined upon the State to grant aid to educational institutions managed by religious minorities and obviously intended for the propagation of their religions.

These instances do not show that the Congress leaders have given a really secular constitution to India. It is not suggested that the State should encourage atheism or even agnosticism but only that it should stand aloof from religious institutions. That is being done neither in India nor in Pakistan. As in many other things Hindus have two yardsticks to measure secularism; one for themselves and the other for Muslims. A Hindu thinks that by merely declaring himself to be a secularist he becomes one and nobody has any right to doubt his *bona fides*. Indeed he resents his action being critically examined to find whether his deeds conform to his declarations. In the case of Muslims however he is too exacting and nothing short of a Muslim's conversion to Hinduism can make him a secularist in the eyes of a Hindu.

Secularism and social democracy are the highest ideals of modern politics. The more a country comes nearer to these goals, the greater progress and prosperity will the people of that country enjoy in their every day life. And conversely the condition of the people in a country which is away from them will be so much the worse. Secularism is a monopoly neither

of Hindus nor of Muslims. Congressmen in India are no more secularists than Muslim Leaguers in Pakistan or to put it in other words the former are no less communal and religion-ridden than the latter. Nationalism of the Congress and communalism of the League are identical creeds. The former is the Nationalism of the Hindus and the latter Nationalism of the Muslims. Man being still mostly guided by impulses, passions and prejudices, and less by reason, it is not easy for genuine secularism to become popular among the people of a culturally backward country as the subcontinent of India. But to reach the goal of freedom there is no short cut. Modern secularism based on the firm foundations of reason and science is the only way to reach that goal. All other paths are blind alleys leading us nowhere and only bringing the people to misery and destruction. Ambitious politicians hungry for power may mix politics and religion to cater for the baser sentiments of the culturally backward people of the country but for the fighters for freedom who detest opportunism there can be no alternative. They will adopt a secularism in which religion is totally divorced from politics for the attainment of their objectives.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

CONGRESS WORDS AND DEEDS

"Statements of policies in election manifestoes are different from practical realisation....Promises are based on ideals and achievements on practicalism." —**Pattabhi Sitarammyya,**

INDIA is not a Secular State; it does not keep politics aloof from religion. Despite the professions of the Congress leaders Hindu culture and Hindu religion are given preference even in affairs of the administration. Having discussed this aspect of the question we may now examine the statement that India is a democratic and a progressive country.

A country can be recognised as democratic if all individuals. parties, communities living in it enjoy equal opportunity and complete freedom in political, economic and social spheres. Let us see if that is so in India.

For three decades before independence the Congress leaders used to make all sorts of promises to the Indian masses. They said that soon after the liquidation of British imperialism India would be free from all injustice—social, political and economic. It was asserted that a millennium was round the corner, only the villainous British stood in the way. In every annual session of the Congress assurances and promises were repeated in addresses, resolutions and statements. Six years have passed. During this period Congress leaders have been in absolute charge of the administration of the country. What are their achievements ?

To begin with politics. It is claimed that the Congress leaders have given a constitution to the Indian people within three years of independence while our neighbour Pakistan has not been able to do so up till now. To draft a constitution for a vast country inhabited by 350 million people

of diverse creeds speaking more than a dozen languages is not an easy job. There are very few countries in the world where leaders have shown such remarkable ability in drafting a constitution and getting it through an assembly of the representatives of the people within such a short time. Some countries took six, eight and as many as twelve years to accomplish the task. What is more, India has peacefully held her first general elections in 1952 on the basis of adult franchise in an orderly manner. Doubtless this is an achievement of which India can be proud. But the adoption of the constitution is not so important as its contents. A constitution can be an instrument of enslavement of the people if it is not founded on the principles of social justice and democracy. It may lead them to poverty and not towards progress and prosperity. And it is exactly the goal of economic poverty, intellectual thraldom and political slavery that Indians are destined to reach through the constitution that Congress has given them.

The Constitution of India is of a peculiar character in so far as all the demerits and defects of the constitutions of the world have been incorporated in it. Generally speaking there are two kinds of constitutions; of the French type and of the American type. All democratic constitutions of the world are more or less based on the one or the other type. Naturally each constitution includes the merits and demerits of the pattern which it follows. It was left to the present rulers of India to give a constitution to the people which has merits of none but contains defects of both.

The preamble of the Indian Constitution says: "We, the people of India, have solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens, justice—social, economic and political—and liberty of thought, expression and belief". These are bold statements and brave words, but are they also borne out by facts? Is there any political, social or economic justice or liberty of thought, expression and belief in India at present?

Article 19 of the Constitution of India says:

(1) All citizens shall have the right :

(a) To freedom of speech and expression.

(b) To assemble peacefully and without arms.

(c) To form associations and unions.

But clauses (2), (3) and (4) provide that the guarantee given in sub-clauses (a), (b) and (c) of clause (1) are all "subject to the operation of any existing law"

It is well known that there is no State Government in India which does not have a security law on its statute book. There are Public Safety Acts, Police Acts, Criminal Law Amendment Acts, Maintenance of Public Peace Acts and such other laws in existence which used to be denounced by the Congress leaders as lawless laws in the days of the British rule. These Acts allow extraordinary powers to the executive to curb freedom of the common man on flimsy grounds. Some of these laws were professedly passed and enacted to check anti-social elements in the country but in actual practice it is the political opponents of the Congress governments who fall victim to these obnoxious and oppressive measures. Even Goonda Acts are pressed into service to stifle independent opinion that is critical of the unpopular authorities for their misbehaviour. Under the provisions of these laws thousands of patriots and lovers of freedom have been time and again consigned to prisons all over the land during the past six years for the only crime that they do not fall in line with those wielding the rod of authority and power.

Soon after the promulgation of the new Constitution the Indian Parliament passed a piece of legislation called the Preventive Detention Act. According to it any one can be arrested and detained for a period of one year without any trial before a court of law.

What is the value then of the guarantee given in Article 19 (1) sub-clauses (a), (b) and (c) when all these are subject to the operation of the existing acts which have snatched the freedom of speech and expression, the right to assemble and to form associations and unions. So long as these laws curbing the liberty of the individual exist it is ridiculous to talk of democracy in

India or of political justice or of freedom of thought, expression and belief.

There is the Article 21 in the Constitution which is a menace to democracy and therefore to civil liberty. It says :

> "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law."

It was originally suggested that this Article should provide that no person shall be deprived of his life and liberty without "due process of law", but the rulers of India substituted the expression "except according to the procedure established by law" for the words "due process of law" as, in their opinion, the words which they have taken from the Japanese Constitution of 1946 are more specific than the words "without due process of law", which occurs in the American Constitution. Had the Article provided that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to due process of law, the supremacy of natural law over arbitrary power would have been established, and it would have been impossible for any legislature in India to make any law in the country which would place the life and liberty of the citizen at the mercy of the executive government. Every action of the executive authority could be tested in a court of law as is done in America and the civil liberty would then have been fully guaranteed to the people. But the Constituent Assembly, on the insistence of the Congress leaders, deliberately substituted the words "except according to procedure established by law" in place of the words "without due process of law", and in doing so, has placed the life and liberty of the individual at the mercy of the executive government. Thus it is impossible for the individual to test the actions of the executive authority in a court of law. In India therefore we have neither any protection against tyrannical laws nor against the arbitrariness of the executive government. The Constitution has deliberately provided for executive justice and not for "rule of law".

To be able to comprehend what this executive justice is like one need study the security Acts which are on the statute books of the different State Governments. Here is an

example. Section 16 of the West Bengal Security Act originally provided that :

> "The Provincial Government, if satisfied on reasonable grounds with respect to any particular person that with a view to preventing him from doing any subversive act it is necessary so to do, may make an order :
>
> (a) Directing that he be detained.
>
> (b) Directing that except in so far as he may be permitted by such authority or person as may be specified therein, he shall not be in any such area or place in West Bengal as may be specified in the order.
>
> (c) Requiring him to reside or remain in such place or within such area in West Bengal as may be specified in the order ; and if he is not already there to proceed to that place or area within such time as may be specified in the order.
>
> (d) Requiring him to notify his movements or to report himself or both to notify his movements and report himself in such manner at such times and to such authority or person as may be specified in the order.
>
> (e) Imposing upon him such restrictions as may be specified in the order in respect of his employment, business, or movements in respect of his activities in relation to the dissemination of news or propagation of opinions".

It is not in West Bengal alone that we have such draconian laws. The Security Acts in other states are no less drastic in nature. Indeed in certain states they are worse. What civil liberty can there be where the executive government possesses powers as wide as these ?

Several cases of unlawful detention and suppression of civil liberties came up before the State high courts and the Supreme Court of India since the Constitution was adopted. In spite of the drawbacks and difficulties in the way of these courts when in some cases the arbitrary actions of the executive

authorities were checked by the courts and the laws declared void action was promptly taken to restore the powers of the Government by means of legislative measures. The Calcutta High Court took the view that it was competent to inquire into the question whether reasonable grounds existed in any particular case with respect to an order under Section 16. Immediately an ordinance was passed removing the words "on reasonable grounds", so that the State Government can now make an order of detention even if not satisfied on reasonable grounds to do so. The object of the ordinance was clearly to prevent the High Court from interfering in any case of detention under Section 16. In Madras the High Court invalidated the Maintenance of Public Order Act and forthwith a Bill was passed into law according to which orders of detention could not be questioned on the ground of any defect, vagueness or insufficiency in the report of causes of detention communicated to the detenus.

When the Article providing for the detention without trial was discussed in the Indian Constituent Assembly on 15th September 1949 Bakshi Tek Chand, M.P., an ex-High Court Judge, described it as "a charter of oppression" and "a charter for the denial of liberty". "It is a charter", he said, "to the state governments permitting them to go on enacting legislation by which people can be kept in detention without trial till such time as they think necessary". Bakshi Tek Chand wanted to know whether there was any written constitution in the world in which there was provision for detention of citizens without trial in normal times. In his presidential address to the Indian Civil Liberties Conference held in Madras in 1949, P.R. Das, an ex-High Court Judge, observed that the Constitution "leaves it open to the executive government to suppress political parties, to interfere with the freedom of the Press, freedom of speech and association, to put people behind the prison bars without bringing them up before courts of law and thus pave the way for dictatorship".

Not satisfied with such anti-democratic provisions in the Constitution a Bill to amend the Constitution was introduced in

the Indian Parliament in May 1951 which *inter alia* further restricted the freedom of speech and expression. At the instance of the Congress leaders the Bill was passed by the House. Commenting on this move *The New York Times* observed :

> "It inevitably comes as a shock that Prime Minister Nehru and his Government were seeking these curbs. This is the same Jawahar Lal Nehru who spent the greater part of his life fighting the British for just such liberties, along with India's National independence....... When it is considered that India still has what amounts to a one party system under the Congress Party, it seems evident that the Government is going too far."

The Constitution while flamboyantly conferring the fundamental human rights on all Indians has made civil liberties a meaningless formality by placing many restrictions on them and by subjecting them to the will of the executive. On the other hand provisions relating to social security and economic re-organisation have been relegated into the Directive Principles which have no real validity.

Restrictions on the civic liberties of the citizens and detention without trial are not the only objectionable features of the Constitution. It is claimed that India is a federal State where federating states are fully autonomous. But while framing the Constitution power has been centralised to such an extent that the federalism has remained only in name. By giving the President, in normal times, the power to refuse assent to any Bill passed by the legislature and by providing that the Ministers shall hold office during the pleasure of the President and not so long as they enjoy the confidence of the Legislature the executive has been made virtually independent of and not responsible to the Parliament.

The President of the Indian Republic can be the most powerful person in the world. He has been vested with unlimited and practically dictatorial powers. Articles 352—360 confer powers on the President of the Republic to suspend the right of Indian citizens to move a court of law for the enforcement of their fundamental rights during an emergency. The President may declare an emergency if there is a "threat of war or an actual aggression or an internal disturbance". He is also

empowered to suspend the Constitution. Under Article 360 the President will be able to modify the financial relationship between the States and the Centre and thus completely centralise financial power which is already distributed on the principle of unitary as opposed to federal finance. In an emergency, therefore, no State will have even the little financial autonomy that it could enjoy because of the sheer enormity of the territory and population of the country. Not satisfied with conferring such unrestrained and dictatorial powers on the President the custodians of the destinies of Indian people vested the President with power to suspend even the fundamental rights. If fundamental rights can be suspended, one may ask, what is fundamental about them ? To prevent the citizen from moving a court of law, even in times of emergency, is to strike at the root of liberty. The famous *habeas corpus* which is the foundation of the rule of law in all civilised countries can be rendered null and void by the President of the Indian Republic. Further more, the President can, by declaring an emergency at his will, suspend the whole Constitution for six months, and, with the support of the majority party, he can suspend it for three years which period can be continued indefinitely by issuing periodic proclamations. By these and other provisions, including the significant and curious one whereby the President can prevent any amendments in the Constitution even when passed by an adequate majority in Legislature, the Constitution not only concentrates all powers in the President and the central executive but also provides avenues for the overthrow of the Constitution and the assumption of an unqualified dictatorship. And the pity is that the President is not directly elected by the people of India as is done in America but is chosen through an indirect election.

Yet this is not all. There are provisions in the Constitution relating to the duty of the Union to protect States against external aggression and internal disturbances. According to these in case of failure of the constitutional machinery in any State the President has the power to issue proclamations assuming to himself all functions of the government of the State and

exercise of legislative powers. The provisions embody the principles underlying Section 93 of the Government of India Act of 1935. The President is to issue such a proclamation on receipt of a report from a Governor or a Rajpramukh of a State, or otherwise if he is himself satisfied that the government of the State could not be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

The provisions in the Constitution vesting the President with unlimited powers can be easily, willingly and greedily utilised by any dictator. When with the existence of these provisions we discern certain unmistakable tendencies and trends in the public life in India it becomes quite ominous. For instance Nehru was presented with a replica of the *Takht-i-Taus* with a map of Asia engraved on it at a public reception arranged in his honour at the Red Fort, Delhi. What does that signify ?

It is argued that whatever its other defects the Constitution has conferred on the people the right of electing their own government through the method of the ballot box. This is considered enough guarantee for the preservation of democracy in India. But we should not forget that in spite of a similar guarantee in their respective constitutions this was the way through which dictatorship was established in Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy. Given the cultural backwardness of the people, their keen desire for hero-worship and the anti-democratic provisions in the Constitution any unscrupulous power-hunter can easily become a dictator in India. Of course Congress leaders would still continue to protest that it was democracy and the choicest democracy in the world. It would not be difficult for them to find a new logic and a new philosophy to justify dictatorship. "During the days of the foreign government the Press was as much a patriotic unit as any political party or agitator", observed Dr. Pattabhi Sitarammyya, President of the Congress, in 1949, "but under the National Government it is a unit of the government. Therefore it is true that the so-called freedom of the Press has been curtailed considerably since the advent of the National Government." To a question

whether this was not autocracy, the Congress President said that "democracy is only the autocracy of the chosen few". This may appear fantastic to those who are accustomed to hear the beautiful pronouncements and attractive resolutions clothed in democratic phraseology of the Congress; but in truth the learned Doctor has wittingly or unwittingly defined the real attitude of all Congressmen towards democracy. "Some friends say I made the Constitution", confessed Dr. Ambedkar, ex-law Minister, Goverment of India, who drafted the Constitution Bill and piloted it in the Constituent Assembly, "but I shall be the first person to burn it. I do don't want it." He was speaking in the Council of State on 2nd. September 1953. When members reminded him of his part in the framing of the Constitution Dr. Ambedkar said: "I was a hack. I did what I was asked to do. I only carried out the wishes of the majority."

A resolution was adopted in 1948 by the Indian Parliament declaring that no communal bodies should be permitted to engage in any political activity in India. The resolution also recommended legislative and administrative steps to prevent such activities. The Government of India accepted the resolution and its leaders announced that they will curb all activities of communal nature. It is highly problematical whether such a restriction is justifiable as it palpably shakes the very foundations of the right of freedom of association. Democratically those who hate communal outlook can by their professions and performances demonstrate to the people that they are right and that their ways alone are conducive to the welfare and progress of the society. By such a method they can educate and enlighten the people and obviate the necessity of communal parties. It is wrong in principle and dangerous in practice to suppress communal parties by resort to force. Those who know how religious minorities have fared in India since the advent of independence would have considered the resolution of the Indian Parliament as a great hardship on them. The persecuted classes and communities could hardly carry on their normal existence for many years to come in independent India without utilising the liberty of collectively protecting themselves by

means of organised expression of their opinion against the violently aggressive attacks of anti-minorities elements of which there is no dearth in the country. But the atmosphere in India is so surcharged against Muslims that they could not dare raise any voice and had to meekly submit to the dictates of the majority and authority. Non-Muslims were, however, stricken with no such terror. Therefore, they refused to abide by the new decision. The Sikhs in the East Punjab, while professing to be the nationalists of the purest brand, were in no mood to wind up their separatist organisation, the Akali Dal. In a public meeting, in Lucknow, Dr. Ambedkar, on behalf of the Harijans, stated only a few days after the adoption of the resolution by the Parliament and acceptance by the Government that the Scheduled Castes Federation will continue to live and fight for the freedom of the untouchables against the dominance of Caste Hindus. Dr. Ambedkar was the Law Minister of the Central Congress Cabinet at the time and naturally his statement caused an uproar in political circles but without making any effect. The Hindu Mahasabha suspended its political activities for a few months after the tragic assassination of Mahatma Gandhi by a Hindu, but feeling that the congenial weather had returned again jumped into the arena with redoubled vigour to work for the establishment of a more militant and aggressive Hindu revivalism than the Congress is able to achieve.

Unbiased critics doubt that Congress leaders are honestly opposed even to Muslim communal politics. No Congressman appears to be against the formation or existence of Muslim political organisations provided the sponsors of these are prepared to surrender their independence and work under the spiritual and cultural hegemony of the Congress. They raise no objection to the existence of Momin Conference, Jamait-ul-Ulema Hind, Azad Muslim Party etc. functioning in the field of politics. Indeed one Momin leader was a Minister in a State Congress Cabinet. Thus the intention of the Government of India is amply exposed.

Communalism in India has come to connote any Muslim

demand for justice and fair play in any sphere of life. If Sikhs, Harijans, Buddhists or any other community fights against their peculiar difficulties and clamour for their demands it is tolerable to Congress leaders and they are prepared to consider the matter. If Hindus aggressively work for Hindu hegemony and domination such activity passes for nationalism. But when a Muslim opens his lips to express any grievance, however legitimate, it becomes hateful communalism. I detest rabid sectarianism which aims at harming other communities or which raises baser passions and vulgar desires. No sensible man can encourage it. But it escapes my comprehension how any one professing to uphold the fundamental right of freedom of association can, as a matter of principle, forbid communal parties to function unless they preach violence or subversion of law and order. If communalism is pernicious because it preaches narrow-mindedness and creates hatred between one section of the people and another, by its very nature nationalism which causes enmity between one country and another is no less. One narrows the vision by differences of religion and the other does so by considerations of geography and race. Both breed reprehensible ideas of intolerance and enmity between man and man. In India particularly nationalism has degenerated into the communalism of the majority besides fostering racial hatred. But no Congress leader has so far thought of banning nationalism in India.

Nationalists shout from house tops that the Government of India has tackled the problem of Princely States in a democratic and statesmanlike manner. Encomiums are showered on Congress leaders for having settled the issue tactfully and dexterously. It is claimed that ninety million people of these feudal States have been freed from medieval slavery of the Princes ; that the princely order has disappeared. There is no doubt that the Government of India has been successful in either forming the Unions of States or merging smaller States with adjoining provinces. But this did not solve the basic problem of the States' people. The accession and the merger has retained intact the old feudal structure. The Princes have been allowed to enjoy huge privy purses. They continue to draw according to their status, the

Nizam of Hyderabad getting no less than Rs. 50 lakhs per annum. The total amount spent from the public exchequer for this purpose is rupees four and a half crores annually. The process of integration has not been accompanied by that of political and economic democratisation sorely needed in the States. Power has been transferred from autocratic princes to totalitarian nationalist leaders who serve as the henchmen of the Congress High Command. In P.E.P.S.U. in the general elections of 1953 the electorate voted majority of non-Congressmen to the Assembly and a non-Congress Government was formed. But the Congress High Command did not allow it to remain in existence for more than a few months. Now there is the President's Raj in that state and attempts are made to bring, by hook or by crook, a Congress government into being. Thus the only change—for the worse—that has taken place is that now virtually nominees of States Ministry and not genuine representatives of the people rule in place of nominees of the Princes. As a result a powerful conservative force has established itself in the political life of the States which has united with the already strong anti-democratic force in the centre and raised difficulties in the way of the political and social progress of the Indian people as a whole. The process in the integration of the States has been one of concentration of power and it can appropriately be compared with the unification of Germany brought about by Bismark. Bismark's plan, as all students of history know, did not usher in a millennium in Goethe's homeland ; nor has Patel's plan proved a panacea for the States' people. The former scheme paved the way for militaryism, fascism, blood-baths and ultimately world war ; so may do the latter in course of time.

There are a few tiny French and Portuguese settlements scattered on the east and west coasts of India. The people living in these settlements were deeply influenced by the attractive pictures drawn of independent India by the Congress leaders before 1947. It was assumed that French and Portuguese Governments would follow in the wake of the British Government and declare the settlements independent. Also, that the people

would be most willing and impatient to join the independent India ruled by the Congress.

Soon after 15th August a cry was raised by the Nationalist Press and the Indian leaders that the settlements should be declared independent. Approaches were made on the governmental level. France was sympathetic and Chandernagore, a French settlement in West Bengal surrounded by the Indian territories on all sides, was the first to be tackled. The people of the settlement were solemnly assured by the Congress leaders that after they joined India their cultural life would not be interfered with and that they would enjoy full autonomy. The Jaipur Congress adopted a resolution and the Government of India issued an official *communique* on October 27, 1949, to this effect. On these assurances the people of Chandernagore voted in a plebiscite for accession to Indian and the settlement was transferred by the French into the Indian hands.

The Government of India appointed an Administrator in Chandernagore. In a supercilious and haughty manner this functionary began to end the autonomy promised to the local people. Naturally he came into clash with the Administrative Council chosen by the people. He issued orders from time to time which were contradictory to those issued by the elected Council. The President of the Council informed Nehru on 11th November 1951 that "the Municipal Assembly and the people of Chandernagore have vehemently condemned the Administrator's action of vetoing a unanimous decision of the elected Assembly". He urged the Government of India "to respect the Chandernagore people's autonomy as assured by the Jaipur Congress and the Government of India's official *communique* of October 27, 1949 and, not to encroach upon them".[1]

Instead of considering the grievances of the accredited leaders of Chandernagore the Government of India despatched a contingent of armed police to the town and fixed the responsibility of expenditure for maintaining it on the people. The public resentment became deeper and on December 2 nearly 3000 people demonstrated in front of the residence of the

[1] The Hindustan Times dated 12th December, 1949.

Administrator. "The demonstrators shouted "Hands off Chandernagore". "No interference in Chandernagore administration" and "the armed police contingent must go back". In a public meeting a strong protest was recorded against the Government of India's "autocratic and undemocratic action with regard to Chandernagore affairs".

Meanwhile public opinion in other settlements underwent a change. There had been far-sighted leaders at all these places who were doubtful about the future of the settlements under independent India. But the enthusiasm that independence of India evoked temporarily all over the country drowned their voice. With the example of Chandernagore before them it appears these anti-merger elements in the settlements became vocal. Before long it was clear to the Congress leaders that if free plebiscites were held in the settlements probably India could not win. The Government of India therefore sent a communication to the French Government on 10th October 1952 maintaining that "a fair referendum or plebiscite is not possible in the settlements under the present circumstances". The reasons the Government gave were that "concerted attempts were made in the settlements to repress and drive away elements holding pro-merger views". Like an autocrat of the medieval times Nehru declared in Madras on October 9, 1952, that "India's stand has been that Pondichery and other French settlements and Portuguese Goa must inevitably belong to the Union of India. There is going to be no further debate about the issue and we are not going to discuss it with anybody any longer". So it comes to this. The people of the settlements are to be transferred like sheep to the tender mercies of the Congress Raj whether they like it or not. That is the freedom and democracy of the Congress conception.

Many years ago the National Congress adopted a clear and emphatic resolution assuring people of India that soon after independence their will be redistribution of the provinces on linguistic basis so that people speaking the same mother tongue are brought together in one administrative unit and get the opportunity for unhampered growth. Independence

came and the people are clamouring for the fulfilment of this solemn promise. But afraid of the democratic spirit which is bound to surge up if States are formed on linguistic basis the Congress leaders have left their pledge unfulfilled and under one pretext or other try to virtually shelve the matter.

The progress and the welfare of any country mainly depend on the economic policy that it adopts. Before independence the National Congress used to consistently advocate a revolutionary programme in this behalf. In annual sessions of the Congress beginning with the one held in Karachi in 1930 radical schemes of economic reconstruction were adumbrated in the shape of lengthy resolutions. The institution of *jagirdari*, the system of landlordism and the monopolisation of the industry and commerce by private interests were declared as the causes of abject poverty of the masses and low standard of life in the country. It was confidently argued that British imperialism was protecting the out-worn, antiquated and toterring economic set-up to foster and safeguard its own vested interests. The people were assured that in independent India all this would end and then the country was bound to make progress by leaps and bounds. These promises were repeated in the election mainfesto in 1952. Condensing the of-repeated assurances of the Congress and its leaders on the eve of independence Acharaya Shanker Rao Dev, General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee, in a lengthy statement said :

> "The Congress is pledqed to political democracy and our *swaraj* will be democratic. We can safely say that the object of the Congress shall be the establishment and maintenance by all peaceful and democratic means (including strikes and *satyagrahas*) of a social democracy in India in which power rests with people.
>
> "If democracy is to be real and if it is to survive it must not only be based on economic equality but also on decentralised industry. Economic equality may be based on centralised big industry or on decentralised industry. The first tends to be totalitarian and the other democratic. Concentration of power in the hands of a few is detrimental to the freedom and equality of many. The historic role of the Congress in the economic field is bold advocacy of decentralised industry."

CONGRESS WORDS AND DEEDS

We have already discussed the nature of political democracy that the Congress is establishing in India. We know that thousands have rotted in jails for offering peaceful *satyagraha*; indeed most of them were kept behind bars on mere suspicion. Now let us have a look at the economic democracy as it is taking form under the fostering care of the Congress Raj.

Besides giving the promises contained in the resolutions and manifestoes several Congress leaders assured the peasantry that "not within weeks but within days" of assumption of power by the Congress *zamindari* will end and *jagirdari* meet its doom. Nearly nine years have swiftly passed by when the Congress Governments were formed in the provinces and India has already enjoyed blessings of independence for more than six years but the outworn, antiquated and the feudal institutions are today still alive. Under one pretext or another the issue is left unsettled and the tillers of the soil are where they were before 1947. Agrarian reforms have no doubt been introduced in all States but the masses have derived little benefit from them.

Conveniently forgetting all the Congress resolutions about nationalisation and decentralization of industries and what they have said hundreds of times against capitalism, the leaders of the Congress Government declaring their economic and industrial policy in 1948 let the field open to big business in almost all directions to exploit the people and the country for at least ten years to come.

Before independence it was easy for Congress leaders to be the champions of freedom and pose as the best qualified men to administer the country. But when they came to power all their abilities were put to test. For years and indeed to this day thay have not been able to formulate any sound economic policy. "I must frankly say", confessed Hare Krishan Mehtab, Industries and Commerce Minister, on 30th December, 1951, in his inaugural address to the fifth All India Commerce Conference, "that we have not yet made up our mind as to which way we are to lead the country. It is because of a want of firm decision on this point that many anomalies are arising and the suggestions which are often made become self-contradictory."

During the Second World War India had, under British imperialism, accumulated to her credit Rs. 1733 crores as sterling balances. Out of this Rs. 284 crores were spent for the purchase of annuities for financing the payment of sterling pensions and acquisition of defence installation stores left behind by the United Kingdom at the end of the war. Also, sterling to the extent of Rs. 777 crores has been transferred to the State Bank of Pakistan. A big slice of the rest has been spent to meet the deficit in trade with the hard currency countries.

Despite all this the industrialists and businessmen continue to be intransigent and refractory. They have kept the money market tight and contrived to create the strange contradictory phenomenon of deflation in economy side by side with country-wide inflation. Industrialists are not prepared even to hear the word nationalisation in the speeches of Congress leaders. They demand complete surrender of the Government on their own terms. Having no more any faith in democracy and the common man Socialist Nehru and his Government, while apparently fretting and fuming at this recalcitrance of the moneyed classes, continue to make further concessions one after another. Addressing the first session of the Central Advisory Council of Industries in New Delhi on 24th January 1949, the Union Minister for Industry and Supply made the following announcement :

> "There is an idea in some quarters that the Government has put undue restriction on private enterprise to develop industry on its own initiative. Nationalisation of any industry, except those which are already under Government direction and management viz. arms and ammunition, railways and the production and control of atomic energy, is out of question."

Even this unambiguous assurance proved insufficient and did not satisfy the industrialists. Presiding over the ninth annual conference of the All India Manufacturers Organisation in Bombay Sir. M. Visveshurya observed :

> "The nationalisation policy is based on Government leanings towards socialism. In a country like ours with 85 p.c. of its population still illiterate and with a very insignificant amount of capital invested in industries, the nationalisation policy is highly prejudicial to progress."

Such criticism had its desired effect. It unnerved the Cong-

ress leaders and the Government of India succumbed to it. Replying only two days after to an address presented to him by the local Chamber of Commerce in Madras Sardar Patel, Deputy Prime Minister of India, openly confessed :

> "If we talk of nationalisation you get afraid. What is going to be nationalised and how is it going to be nationalised ? When the Government has not enough men and means to run its own administration where is nationalisation to come from ?
>
> "Therefore do not be afraid of nationalisation. Take it from me as gospel truth that this Government has not the capacity and means to undertake nationalisation of any industry at present. If anybody talks of nationalisation, it is only for leadership".

One wonders if the last sentence was meant to be a warning to those Congress Ministers who believed themselves to be leftists.

The economic policy of the Congress Government is determined by two factors. One is the primacy of the military expenditure, which is calculated to check the production of consumer goods and to prevent the resources of the State from being utilised for agricultural improvements. About 55% of the total revenue of the Central Government is spent on Defence. The other factor is reliance of the Government on the capitalist interests for industrial expansion. This results and is bound to result not in greater production but in greater profiteering.

This is the age of planning and the Congress leaders have formulated a Five Year Plan which has been accepted by the Indian Parliament. Interested people have lavished praise on it as an ambitious attempt for the social and economic reconstruction of the country. But the acceptance of the theoretical foundations on which the plan is based are the first step on the road to ruin.

As usual the aims and objects of the planning are couched in attractive language. "The central objective of the planning in India is to raise the standard of living of the people and to open out to them opportunities for a richer and more varied life", thunders the first Five Year Plan of India. But the point is, can the people of India achieve this objective by the implementation of the plan ? The plan states: "The level of production and the material well-being of a com-

munity depend mainly upon the stock of capital at its disposal". There is no denying the fact that the level of production is directly correlated to the stock of capital but the two can be positively or negatively correlated depending on firstly the use to which capital is being put and secondly the ways and means by which the stock itself is built up. There are economies in the world today where in a high level of capital stock such goods as armaments are produced causing misery to millions. It is a fact that in these economies there is high level of national output and income. But they are cause of low real incomes and inadequate material well-being for the people at large. The question is not of national output or stock of capital at the disposal of the country ; it is the equitable distribution of the output and income among the various sections and classes. The Indian planners have studiously avoided to answer this cruicial question. They say that, "there are two ways of stepping up capital formation, one is to utilise resources unutilised and the other is to divert resources from the production of consumer goods." After discussing the alternative in detail the planners arrive at the conclusion that higher consumption has to be sacrificed at the altar of higher capital formation which in the long run will yield high real incomes. What that actually implies will be clear from the fact that "after the effort which will necessitate a great deal of hard work and austerity" stretched over a period of twenty-seven years the plan consoles us that the per capita incomes will be doubled and the average income of an Indian in the year 1977 would rise to about Rs. 44 per mensem provided other things remain the same meanwhile which nobody can guarantee.

The Indian planners possessed of concern for the democratic institutions as embodied in the Constitution of the country have tried to take a leaf out of British experience and built a pattern of "mixed economy" and the objective of a "Welfare State". The economy will have two sectors, one under the direct control of the State and the other where enterprising businessmen will be allowed to function on profit basis. It signifies an attempt to adapt capitalism to the requirements of

overall social objectives. In Britian the effective wielding of the weapons of taxation and the programme of partial nationalisation enabled the State to lay its hands on a significant portion of the investible surplus, thus rendering possible its utilisation for the free and universal social services especially the health services. But the demands of defence have forced the Labour intellectuals to admit that the mixed economy has reached a dead end. In India such an economy has lesser chances of success. Here everything will be at the mercy of the unscrupulous adventurers and nothing for the welfare of the State.

The Indian planners state that "the tempo of economic development will depend, in the initial stages largely on the volume of agricultural production and the surplus that is available from it". This would be a good statement in spite of the vague qualification "in the initial stages" because Indian economy mainly depends on agricultural development. But instead of having short term and small scale projects requiring a much smaller scale of financial investment they have looked to wrong theoretical tools for increasing production. And so we have the huge river valley projects which will ultimately lead to deficit financing, centralisation of power and the consequential misery with which the contemporary world is not unfamiliar.

After five years the plan promises to raise the standard of living of the country as a whole by one per cent. But the increased income is not to be shared equally by all classes. The upper strata of the society particularly those who will run the private sector of the plan will surely appropriate the large share. Very little will fall to the lot of the average man and his standard will remain practically unchanged. Perhaps worse will happen. The rate of the growth of population in India is frightening—an addition of five million mouths to feed every year. Drastic steps should have been adopted to stop this. But afraid to touch the superstitions and the prejudices of the religion-ridden people the planners have not effectively dealt with the problem. So the sons of Mother India will continue to

multiply and be a cause of lowering the standard of the average man.

Thus as the plan stands the perspective is not bright ; it is of deficit financing, increasing dependence on foreign aid, rising prices, increasing corruption, bondage and misery. The plan will make the rich richer and the poor poorer. It might be successful in increasing capital formation and national income but that will benefit the upper classes and the teeming, toiling millions of the country will suffer more heavily than at present. "The absence of investment interest has become a noticeable feature these days", observed Chuni Lal B. Mehta, President of the Indian Stock Exchange, addressing the 15th annual general meeting of the Exchange on 5th July 1953. "The reasons are not far to seek. The cost of living has been continually rising all the while, with no signs of coming down. Consequently the margin of saving with the middle class people has further narrowed down. The middle class ordinarily invest in stock and shares". The business has slackened and more and more people are thrown out of employment. "One thing oppresses me and that is the extent of unemployment that exists in this country", stated Jawahar Lal Nehru addressing the All India Congress Committee in July 1953 in Agra.

The Indian people have no hand in the formation of the Five Year Plan ; it has been imposed upon them and by its very nature it cannot enthuse them because it is beyond their comprehension. Faced with the increasing public frustration and consequent non-co-operation the tendency in the rulers will be to centralise power more and more. The Congressmen have already started the slogan "one country, one plan". It will lead to "one party, one flag and one leader". Of course India will still be a democratic republic. Only the meaning of terms will have changed. Dr. Pattabhi Sitarammyya, the eminent historian of the Congress, has indicated the way and given the lead by saying that democracy is the autocracy of the chosen few.

Scarcity of food grains is one of the great problems that faced India after the partition. Famine conditions obtained in many parts of the country. There were more demogogic than

sensible declarations by the Central Ministers including Nehru that they would make India self-sufficient in two years. Even the day was fixed after which not a grain would be imported. But facts and figures have the bad habit of being stubborn and are not scared away by tub-thumping of politicians. In 1951 the scarcity became very acute and but for the timely aid of America in the shape of two million tons of food grains partly as gift and partly as loan m illions of Indians belonging to the poorer classes might not have been living today. If people are better fed and the threat of famine has been averted from many parts of the country thanks are due to the generosity and the munificence of the good Americans. Again the slogans of self-sufficiency are being raised on the basis of the implementation of the Five Year Plan. Are these dependable ? Only when the American stocks are exhausted we can know.

India, one can easily see, has, so soon after independence, come in the iron clutches of the capitalists to constantly appease whom the National Government under the leadership of Socialist Nehru, have speedily descended from the high pedestal of revolution ,which the Congressmen appeared to have mounted at the Karachi session of the Congress. "Since the attainment of independence we seem to have lost the inspiration of a great purpose", confessed Dr. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of India, in his convocation address to the students of the Delhi University on 5th December 1953. The solemn pledges given to the people in the Karachi session and ever since repeated year after year, have been broken during the past six years. Of course Nehru and his colleagues continue to dupe the gullible that India is marching under their guidance towards the goal of economic freedom, only people should remain loyal and devoted as before. But the truth was blurted out by Dr. Pattabhi Sitarammyya, the then, Congress President, in a Press Conference at Madras on January 13, 1949, when he frankly declared that "statements of policies in election manifestoes are different from practical realisation" and that "promises are based on ideals and achievements on practicalism". Is it any wonder that people are disillusioned,

frustrated and dejected so soon after independence for the attainment of which they struggled for over fifty years and gave supreme sacrifices ? Is it any wonder that *satyagraha* and strikes of clerks, teachers, *patwaris*, railway workers and such other low-paid employees have become common. Examining the post-independence picture of the country Acharya Kripalani told Pressman on December 1, 1953, at Trivandrum : "Food has become dearer and more adulterated while cloth though produced in greater quantity in the country is costly. In the matter of housing, not only rents have increased, but the cost of building materials have also risen. There has been a set-back in primary education and school fees have also increased. There are in India today many places where famine conditions exist. You have them here and in Tamil Nad. The Government cannot provide essentials of life to the people and on the horizon there is no ray of hope". Summing up his criticism of the Congress rule Acharya Kripalani said: "From every point of view we have degenerated. When a nation degenerates like that the responsibility is on the leaders of the people". Yet to all the grievances of the suffering people and the criticism of the discriminating patriots Premier Nehru has one and the only one reply to vouchsafe. "This is no time for carping criticism. This is no time for demands", said the Prime Minister in his convocation address at the Lucknow University. "There is criticism and unessential talk. Now is the time for work. This generation is condemned to hard labour". But who can guarantee that things will improve after the present generation is gone. And have those who live today no right to be happy ? One is tempted to remind Nehru what he said to the nation on 1st May 1951, in a broadcast speech dealing with scarcity of food grains. He observed : "If we think too much of our tomorrow and the day after what of those who may see no tomorrow ?"

The sage advice to wait for prosperous days is meant for the starving, naked and miserable millions and not for the industrialists, profiteers and big business who are rolling in

wealth and luxuries as never before; it is not certainly for the Congress leaders and their adherents who are enjoying the positions of power and all comforts of life. It will be recalled that years ago the Congress adopted a resolution that in independent India no public servant would be allowed to draw more than Rs. 500 P.M. as his salary. The Gandhian moralists felt horrified that when masses were poverty-stricken and famishing any official should be cruel enough to draw a "fat salary running into four figures" from the public exchequer. Evidently this resolution has been thrown to the winds and no Congress leader appears to remember it now as many of them are in receipt of fat salaries in certain cases more than six times the maximum fixed by the Mahatma himself.

The achievements of the Congress Government in the sphere of social reform are not creditable in any way. It is common knowledge that Hindu women are suffering under manifold disabilities and disadvantages which the age-old customs, traditions and practices have imposed upon them. Enlightened opinion in the community has been expressed in strong terms about the wretched state of women and high-souled reformers have vigorously advocated introduction of legislation to liberate them. It was in the thirties, during the days of the British, that a Hindu Code Bill was drafted for the purpose. The draft went through many stages but could never be passed into an Act.The revolutionary and sensitive Congress leaders did not like that a foreign government should commit the unholy act of emancipating Hindu women and promised that the reform would be introduced on the morrow of independence.

The Bill was closely examined by the Congress legislators and it came before Parliament several times but the Gandhian revolutionaries were scared by the very idea of men losing the slaves that God had granted to their charge since times immemorial in this land of spiritualism. There was vehement opposition from many sides in the Parliament. The Socialist Prime Minister felt annoyed and in a fit of bravado declared on the floor of the House in January 1951 that his Government would live or fall with the Bill. The Hindu Code Bill was never

passed by the Parliament though subsequently it was drastically amended and changed beyond recognition. But Nehru's Government merrily continued to be in office.

The Bill was ultimately withdrawn by the Government and split up into various smaller Bills. To placate the reactionaries, the vital provisions—the very soul of the reform—were abandoned and unimportant parts are now being put before Parliament in driblets.

Another stigma on the name of India is untouchability which has reduced a hundred million human beings to the position of pariahs and pye-dogs. During the days of the struggle for independence the Congress had made the removal of untouchability as one of its primary objectives. As usual it was affirmed that the imperialist British were purposefully thwarting the Congress movement for the removal of untouchability and that with the attainment of independence no one would remain untouchable. What are the achievements of the Congress rulers in this behalf? The Article 17 of the Indian Constitution boldly declares that "untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of untouchability shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law". But what is the actual position? Let Jagjivan Ram, the Harijan member of Nehru's Cabinet, say. "Though the Government has abolished untouchability by law the decision has yet to be implemented", complained he in a speech in Bombay on 22nd September, 1952. "In almost every village in the country, especially in South India, people follow a policy of segregating the Harijans (untouchables). On the one hand we call every one equal while, on the other, we carry on a policy of segregation. How long can we tolerate the present position? We have been patient but patience can not last for ever".

Space forbids to discuss in greater details the achievements (or failures) of the Congress leaders to implement the over due social reforms. But I think what has already been stated is enough to give a glimpse of the same.

CHAPTER TWENTY

MISGOVERNMENT AND HOOLIGANISM

HAVING accepted the principle of partition on religious basis underlying the Mountbatten Plan, Congress leaders had no right to interfere in the administration of the Kashmir State or bring any pressure on the Maharaja to accede to India. Indeed honesty and fairness demanded that even though the Kashmir ruler had made any overtures in this behalf he should have been plainly told that it was for Kashmiris alone to decide their future and India would directly or indirectly be no party to influence that decision. As shown the Congress leaders did not adopt that straightforward course.

Judged by the ideals and ambitions of the Indian leaders and the conditions obtaining at present India is not a secular State; it is neither progressive nor prosperous. Legally, constitutionally, politically or morally the accession of Kashmir to India without ascertaining the wishes of the State people was wholly unjustified. Therefore the occupation of the country by the Indian armies created a highly explosive atmosphere and added to the tension already existing in the State.

The rebellion in Poonch, the resistance of the people in the Valley and the attack of the tribesmen from the north west forced the Maharaja to form an Emergency Administration and hand over power to the Nationalist clique. Like famished men who cannot judge when suddenly all varieties of dishes are placed before them to eat the Nationalists did not know how to use the unlimited authority which came unexpectedly into their hands. They could not distinguish between right and wrong. Application of power to glorify themselves became their sole aim. By humiliating and torturing their opponents including all those who had refused to support them in the past, by commandeering property of citizens, by issuing peremptory orders to high officials merely to tease them, by using State

cars for party work, by allotting Government buildings to party members, by distributing valuable goods lying in the *Toshakhana* amongst themselves, and by hundred other similar actions the Nationalists wanted to impress upon the people that they were now the masters of the land.

In spite of this clumsy demonstration of power Abdullah was not sure where he stood. He talked loudly and proudly to the people about his victory and wanted them to believe that his position was no less than that of any triumphant revolutionary. But mentally he was torn by the realities of the situation. He was, he felt, only the head of an emergency administration and the Maharaja's machinery to rule the country was intact, though his power to rule was in suspension.

On the day the Maharaja was forced to establish the Emergency Administration in the State many leaders in India believed that Pakistan could not exist for long. The war in Kashmir was considered as god-send. It was thought that the Indian armies would push the tribesmen and Azad Kashmir forces back beyond the boundaries of the State. The Red Shirts of Khan brothers were expected to rise in rebellion in the N.W.F.P. against the League Government. Dr Khan Sahib had come to Kashmir soon after the release of Abdullah and had long talks with the Nationalist leader in Srinagar. It is not known what transpired between them. But if rumours spread by the Nationalists could be given any credence it was expected that with the support of the Indian armies the Red Shirts would capture power in the N.W.F.P. Subsequently I was told in detail about this fanciful scheme by an erstwhile Socialist who was in the confidence of the top-ranking Nationalist leaders and had come to see me in my cell in Jammu jail in the middle of November 1947. Had these developments taken place according to fancy there is every probability that Pakistan would have been wiped out of existence. Then there would be no need for any emergency administration in the State as normal conditions would have returned and the Mahajan Government which continued to remain in existence for many months after October 1947 would have resumed the charge of the administration.

In that case the Nationalists would have received the crumbs of office reserved for them. But by March 1948 it became evident that not only Pakistan had the strength and capability to defend herself against aggression and to suppress internal disorder but that the people in the Valley did not support the Nationalists and did not welcome the Indian armies as their liberators. Besides, the world opinion also grew intensely hostile to India in regard to the Kashmir issue. The U.N. Security Council left no doubt about the opinion of the statesmen at Lake Success and it was clear that the Kashmir problem could be finally and amicably settled only through the democratic method of a fair and impartial plebiscite.

The Nationalists have ever been the deadliest foes of Pakistan. They have also used their powers to crush the democratic, revolutionary forces in the State. Yet it is a fact that whatever political power they secured from their masters at New Delhi during the past six years has come to them because the democratic elements inside the State kept the torch of liberation burning or because Pakistan challenged the validity of Kashmir's accession to India and kept the issue alive in the international field.

Anyway when in March 1948 it was obvious that the Kashmir operations were not very successful the Nationalists found the climate suitable for pressing their fresh demands. Abdullah began to insist that he should be allowed by the Maharaja to form his own national government. Having miserably failed to convince the world that the State people backed the Nationalists and having been exposed before the Security Council by the eloquent and straightforward presentation of the matter by the Pakistan delegation, Nehru prevailed upon the Maharaja to allow Abdullah to form the Government in order that the State people particularly Muslims might believe that Kashmir had attained popular administration. The Congress leaders imagined and made the Maharaja believe that this would help them to make the accession of the State to India permanent. And if that aim was achieved they knew how to deal with the matter in accordance with their

wishes. So the ruse of a "popular" Government in Kashmir was used on the 5th of March 1949 when the Dogra Maharaja still reluctantly but with great hopes of his own ultimate victory appointed Abdullah his Prime Minister with freedom to choose his other colleagues. The first Nationalist Cabinet consisted of eight members: (1) Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, Prime Minister and (2) Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed, (3) Ghulam Mohmmed Sadiq, (4) Mirza M. Afzal Beg, (5) Sham Lal Saraf, (6) Girdhari Lal Dogra, (7) Sardar Budh Singh, (8) Col. Pir Mohammed Khan, (Ministers). Two points are notable in connection with these appointments. First, Bakhshi became the Deputy Prime Minister in supersession of the stronger claims of Beg. Second, Col. Pir Mohammed who had never been a member of the National Conference but had in fact consistently opposed it, was taken in the Cabinet to show that Jammu Muslims were also represented in the Government.

The Nationalists came to power not because the people had elected them as their representatives by free vote but because India wanted to use them with two objectives. On the one hand the Congress leaders intended to throw dust in the eyes of the world and make them believe that with the installation of the Nationalist regime there was a popular government in the India-occupied Kashmir; on the other they hoped to befool Kashmiri Muslims by showing to them that they were free people because their own leaders were at the helm of the affairs. For, was not a Kashmiri Muslim the Prime Minister of the State for the first time during the 102-year-old Dogra Rule and were not some more State Muslims in the Cabinet appointed by him? Above all, these Kashmiri Ministers were those public men who had fought for the freedom of Kashmir and enjoyed popularity for several years. Congress leaders were sure that the trick would be successful and their power-hungry protege had no doubts that he had won the day.

Abdullah and his chosen colleagues of the Nationalist Cabinet, champions of the 'Quit Kashmir' agitation, took the oath of loyalty to the Dogra Maharaja, to his throne and

crown and to his successors, on 25th March 1948, before assuming charge of the "revolutionary Government". With renewed vigour and enthusiasm Abdullah began to protest that he was not a puppet of either the Dogra Maharaja or Indian imperialism, but was a full fledged democratic head of Kashmir brought to power by the will of the people. The Nationalists declared that Kashmir was completely free from the alien domination after several centuries and to prove it so they ordered the celebration of an independence week from May 7 to 14 in which public money was spent lavishly over gala performances, fire works, dancing, drinking, carousing and merry-making. Public meetings were held in which people were assured that there would be complete democracy on the basis of the 'New Kashmir' manifesto adopted by the National Conference in 1944. Abdullah announced that there was thenceforth "people's raj — a social democracy — in Kashmir and he himself was its chosen head". Indeed he compared himself, in several meetings, with President Truman and Premier Attlee. "The Dogra Rule is dead and the Maharaja has ceased to have any authority", declared the Nationalist leader.

Now this would be all right if it were so. But the grim reality which all but the Nationalists could palpably feel was that Kashmir was not free; that the little civil liberty gained in seventeen years of long and heroic fight was lost and, worse still, when Kashmiris could be free from the Dogra thraldom the Nationalists imported Hindu and Sikh armies of India to protect the tottering, alien rule. No doubt as a matter of diplomacy the Government of India prevailed upon the Maharaja to allow the Nationalists unlimited political authority to face the revolutionary situation and suppress the public risings. The Nationalists hoisted their party flag on the State buildings, made laws as they pleased, passed ordinances as they liked, and spent lakhs from the public exchequer without keeping any accounts. They suspended, dismissed and degraded the old officials and appointed their own party men wherever they desired. They monkeyed with statecraft according to their sweet will. They

did not leave the Maharaja untouched. They confiscated some of his reserved lands and ordered that the privy purse of the Maharaja should be reduced to Rs. 40,000 a month. All this was done to show that Kashmir was free and the Nationalist Government was sole master of the land. Undoubtedly some sections of the illiterate and backward people were impressed. But the discerning, the experienced fighters for freedom were not. They continued to ask the basic question : "Who is the legal and constitutional master of Kashmir—the Maharaja or the Kashmiris? Does the Nationalist Government derive authority from the State people or the Dogra Maharaja" ? To this there could be only one answer. It was Hari Singh, the real sovereign under Indian suzerainty, Abdullah's hireling heroics notwithstanding.

The Nationalists were so pleased with attainment of personal power that for a few months they did not worry. But soon they began to be tormented by doubt. Abdullah admitted in a Press Conference in Delhi on 30th September 1948 that "his struggle with Maharaja was still going on, because the latter was anxious to rule and was not prepared merely to reign". This confession was damaging. Abdullah thought that by raising this new slogan he would be able to play simultaneously the contradictory roles of a revolutionary and the enjoyer of power granted by the Maharaja. On March 1, 1949 he said in a public meeting in Baramulla that "the primary issue before us is that of complete freedom from autocratic rule". One was left to wonder if this was so why did the Nationalists waste public money lavishly on independence celebrations so early when complete freedom from autocracy was yet to be achieved. If the Dogra Maharaja was still in an advantageous position to dictate and snatch the authority from the Nationalist hands what sort of freedom was it that the Nationalist leaders had made the people celebrate ?

As already stated, long before the war began the leaders of different political parties in Kashmir had unambiguously demanded that the accession issue be decided by the free vote of the people. But afraid of democratic verdict and

with sinister motives both the Maharaja and the Nationalists refused, under one pretext or another, to submit to the free will of the people. The attitude of the Nationalists was characteristic. As usual they blew hot and cold in the same breath. They claimed that they were the chosen representatives of the forty lakhs of the State's people. But they shirked facing a free plebiscite under impartial international auspices. Beaten in the debates at Lake Success by forthright criticism of the members of the Security Council Abdullah, on his return, joined the chorus of his Indian masters in saying that power politics ruled U.N. councils implying that he was not maliciously acknowledged as the real representative of the State's people and questioning why the aggression of the Government of India was not condoned. When the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan was about to arrive in the subcontinent Abdullah declared in a public meeting in Srinagar that he would not allow the Commission to come to Kashmir because he did not recognise the right of any outside agency to interfere in the internal affairs of the State. During the whole of 1949 he repeated in many public meetings and Press conferences that the accession of Kashmir to India was final, unalterable and irrevocable and that there could be no reversal. There was hardly any of his colleagues who did not say the same publicly. The official organ of the National Conference, *The Khidmat*, repeated it times without number. In a chorus the Nationalists cried "there is no question of a plebiscite· certainly there is no need". With this mentality the mere mention of plebiscite became a red rag to them. When a convention of the Nationalist workers met at Mujahid Manzil in Srinagar on 12th October 1948 to review the events of the past year, it "confirmed and made permanent the provisional accession of the State to India and declared that there was no need to have a plebiscite". The Nationalist lovers of Kashmir and its freedom in this very convention "urgently demanded from the Indian Union to accelerate its military operations on all Kashmir fronts so that the whole State is freed and the war ended in an early success". It is no

fault of the Nationalists tnat the will of the State's people supported by world opinion has forced all parties concerned to agree to settle the issue by the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite.

As we know "New Kashmir" is a blue print of an utopian and romantic social democracy under the aegis of the Maharaja, which the Nationalists declared they would implement as soon as they came to power. Since its adoption, in 1943, the National Conference, year after year, repeated the assurance to the people in its annual sessions. "New Kashmir" became the stock-in-trade of all the Nationalist leaders for their discourses, speeches and propaganda. On assumption of power and responsibilities as the Maharaja's Chief Officer of the Emergency Administration· Abdullah announced that the policy of his Government would be based on the provisions of the New Kashmir Manifesto. Having failed to carry out the promise during the period of emergency which was supposed to have ended by March 1948 Abdullah repeated the assurance when he formed the full-fledged Nationalist Government. Till these words are being written Kashmir people have known to their cost what sort of "New Kashmir" Nationalists have been building in actual practice. Kashmiris have tasted the bitterest fruits of the "popular" government in ample measure.

The few civil liberties the Kashmiris had achieved through struggles during eighteen years since 1931 particularly in the sphere of expression of opinion have vanished. "I cannot allow any one to support Pakistan", "I shall uproot them who speak in praise of Pakistan", "Those who are for Pakistan have no place in Kashmir, they should go to Pakistan", "I cannot hear the name of Pakistan", these and such were the fulminations Abdullah and his colleagues thundered from time to time. For being suspected of leanings towards Pakistan people were arrested in thousands not like respectable citizens and political opponents whose honest opinions were different from those of the men in power, not even like ordinary human beings but as pariah dogs; prisoners' hands were frequently tied with ropes behind their backs and they were dragged like animals through

the main bazaars of Srinagar and other towns in the Valley. All the requisites of law such as issue of warrants were dispensed with. In the beginning besides the police, the Nationalist volunteers and workers had arrogated to themselves the legal authority of arresting and dragging any political suspect. In this blind general round-up the members of all political parties excepting the National Conference were consigned to prison. The main target were the members of the three organisations, the Kisan Mazdoor Conference, the Socialist Party and the Muslim Conference which had openly committed themselves to the view that the accession issue should be decided through the method of a free plebiscite. And yet it were not only the politicals who suffered incarceration. Under cloak of politics the Nationalists squared up their private accounts with citizens who had absolutely nothing to do with politics. They took their personal revenge in abundance. Any one whom a Nationalist worker hated for reasons other than political was arrested. There was no one to object because those who raised a voice of protest also suffered. For months people were dragged from homes merely on a complaint, often verbal, by Nationalists and lodged in jails as detenus. While being carried through bazaars the arrested people were abused, pelted and beaten. In many cases the clothes of victims were torn off and their faces besmeared with mud or dung. People deprived of their liberty and treated in this outrageous manner included educated men, lawyers, professors, journalists, municipal councillors, legislators, teachers, gazetted officers, college students, traders and others.

It was unthinkable that the revengeful Nationalists would keep Ram Chandra Kak, untouched. This man who refused to learn even through bitter experience appeared totally indifferent to the explosive situation that had developed in the country. Immediately after his discharge from service by the ungrateful Maharaja instead of going abroad, as he ought to have done, Kak went to Gulmarg for rest. There his lodging was attacked and pelted by the Nationalists and the police merely laughed at his complaint. This too did not alarm him. He re-

turned to Srinagar by the beginning of September to find that Nationalist hooliganism was virtually in control of the city. He now made an effort to leave Kashmir. But by this time it was too late. At the aerodrome Kak was served with an order that he was interned within Srinagar Municipal limits and could not go anywhere else without permission. Subsequently at the instance of the Nationalists some charges of a serious nature were framed against him by the Janak Singh Government and a commission of inquiry was set up to look into the matter. Among the prosecution witnesses Ghulam Mustafa Malik, vice-president of the State People's Conference, figured prominently whom Kak had described to me as the best of the honest patriots in Kashmir !

Soon after the Nationalists took charge of the administration Kak was arrested and put in the lock-up. Three criminal cases of corruption were launched against him. He was carried by the police under instructions of Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed, from the Kothi Bagh Sub-Jail to the court, a long distance, on foot. Throughout the way in a pre-planned manner the Nationalist workers threw stones, dust and other refuse at him. Some spat at his face and not a few loudly spoke vulgar, obscene and vituperative language while abusing him. In the court room in presence of the helpless, wretched, weakling who presided over the court the Nationalists did him physical violence. The proceedings of the cases were deliberately prolonged for months to repeat these disgraceful scenes. Ultimately the magistrate found Kak guilty in one case and punished him with imprisonment and a huge fine. The relatives of Kak did not go unnoticed. The Nationalists made their life impossible so that gradually almost all of them were forced to quit Kashmir. Once the Nationalists molested a number of girls belonging to Kak family while they were on their way to the local college.

The rebellion in the State, presence of foreign armies and incursion by the tribesmen from the north-west produced insecurity of life and uncertainty about future. People began to leave the country by thousands. In such circumstances while Abdullah repeatedly assured the people of safety and advised

every man, woman and child to stick to his or her post he despatched, by air, his own wife and children to Indore in Central India where his brother-in-law, Ghulam Qadir, was employed in the Maharaja's service. The top-ranking Nationalist leaders also saw to it that arrangements for flying them to destinations outside the State were always ready at hand in case of emergency.

The inhuman repression of the Nationalists did not prove successful in terrorising the people. It only added fuel to the fire ; there was stiff opposition from all sides. For the first time in the annals of Kashmir hundreds of Government servants—magistrates, gazetted officers, departmental heads, high-ranking secretaries and others—candidly expressed their opposition to the scandalous regime and black terror with the result that they were not only discharged from service but were also thrown into prison. All those clapped were not supporters of State's accession to Pakistan. Many suffered because they opposed the Government for its inhumanity or denounced *goondaism* and high handedness. Mere criticism of Government, however healthy, became crime deserving imprisonment. One could live in Kashmir by completely surrendering one's intellectual and spiritual freedom ; otherwise not. But the spirit of resistance rose so high and urge for liberty became so intense that educated women for the first time joined the ranks of the fighters. They arranged a demonstration against the Government. But the sponsors of 'New Kashmir' Plan which contains a charter of rights for women, assaulted the demonstrators, tore off their dress, pulled out their hair and dragged them in the public street before sending them to lock-up.

More than ten thousand people in the Valley of Kashmir alone have been thrown into the jails during the Nationalist regime. The space in the prisons is not unlimited. So hundreds of murderers, dacoits, felons, burglars and cut-throats were set at liberty in 1947-48 to make room for these "more dangerous criminals". Hundreds of the political workers belonging to the Valley were despatched to the jails in the Jammu Province. Concentration camps were improvised to accommodate the surplus

number. During the century-old Dogra rule so many political prisoners were never lodged in jails under any regime. There were no suitable arrangements for the up-keep and maintenance of those arrested and put behind bars. For days detenus had to go without meals in winter 1948 which they were entitled to get even as ordinary criminals. They protested and were flogged under orders of Bakhshi. Kashmiris accustomed to the salubrious, bracing and cold climate of the Valley could not stand the scorching heat of summer in dry Reasi and malarial Kathua in the Jammu Province. Many prisoners fell ill ; death also took its toll. Yet the "New Kashmir" Government continued to keep Kashmiris in Jammu and insisted that during summer nights they should sleep in their closed cells. Many lived like this for months and years till the day of their release. I have shared this misfortune as a detenu in different jails of the Jammu Province for nearly three years and can therefore speak from personal experience.

It was amusing to recall that only a few months earlier in 1946-47 the Nationalist leaders, when imprisoned by the Maharaja's previous Government in connection with "Quit Kashmir" agitation, had resorted to mass hunger-strike for having been transferred to Jammu jails. They had also demanded amenities and allowances for the period of detention. Now they did not hesitate to send their Kashmiri opponents and critics to the unhealthiest of jails in the State in the sweltering heat of summer.

If this was the condition of freedom of expression the freedom of assembly did fare no better. Throughout the Valley people were not allowed to hold any meetings except in support and praise of the National Conference and its leaders. Every one disagreeing with the Nationalists was dubbed as a communalist. "I shall not allow communalism to function in the State", declared Abdullah. But while the Praja Parishad of the Dogra Hindus, S. D. Yuvak Sabha, the sectional organisation of Kashmiri Pandits, and Khalsa Durbar, the Sikh communal organisation, worked more freely than before, the Nationalist Government pounced upon the Socialist Party and the Kisan Mazdoor Conference along with the Muslim Con-

ference because both the organisations had advised the Maharaja to accede to Pakistan or in the alternative allow people to express their free opinion in an impartial plebiscite.

The Press suffered even worse. The papers holding independent views were muzzled. All criticism and all opposition, however moderate, was ruthlessly suppressed. The journals not prepared to fall in line with the Government policy, were forced to close down. Those that remained but would not yield were ordered to be rigorously pre-censored. This virtually killed them. The Information Bureau of the Government headed by unscrupulous men corrupted papers by bribing them to support the Indian occupation and praise the Nationalist Government. Local correspondents of outside newspapers and news agencies were intimidated and forbidden to send any reports of daily happenings calculated to damage the reputation of the Government and its leaders. An ordinance was promulgated declaring Pakistan an enemy country and its supporters as enemy agents. All leading journals published in Pakistan were banned. More than twenty of the Indian papers, critical of the Nationalists, also were not allowed entry into the jurisdiction of the State. Not feeling secure even after having muzzled the State Press and banned all critical outside papers, the Nationalist Government, copying the Nazis, ordered that no one should listen into Radio Pakistan as well as the Azad Kashmir Radio which had begun to deliver messages on air by the summer of 1948.

Some people however used to go out of Kashmir on business or otherwise and carry the reports of the real state of affairs in the Valley. Soon this became a source of trouble and inconvenience. Orders were therefore issued that nobody should be allowed to leave the State boundaries without securing official permission which was not easily granted. Kashmir was sealed up to make the Nationalists appear popular if not within the State at least to the outside world. But such were the efficient arrangements of publicity organised by the fighters for freedom that the true reports of the everyday occur-

rences in the Valley uninterruptedly continued to be despatched by diverse methods and published outside in the foreign Press.

And the propagandists of the National Conference no less than Abdullah himself went on claiming that the Government was building "New Kashmir" on the lines laid down in the party manifesto. The manifesto says in articles 3 and 4 that there will be "complete freedom of expression, freedom of Press, freedom of association and freedom of movement and travel".

Yet this was not all. In their day to day administration the new rulers honoured laws, regulations and rules more in breach than in observance. The word of the power-drunk Nationalists was everything; it was law. Any body could be insulted, beaten, dishonoured and abused with impunity. Private taxes were levied and realized. Private property of patriots and fighters for freedom was officially confiscated and unofficially looted. Things and goods of peaceful citizens were snatched in broad-day light by the volunteers of the National Conference. There was no help for the poor victims. When approached the police flatly refused to register cases against the culprits because the guardians of law and order did not like to fall into disfavour of the Kashmir Government by bringing the Nationalist ruffians to book.

The power-hungry Nationalists upset the civil services. Under democratic government in any part of the world the services are guaranteed security by all political parties so that whatever the form or the policy of the government civil servants are always loyal to it. But to make room for partymen who were impatient to encash their services to the party, hundreds of innocent government employees, high and low, were kicked out on mere pretexts such as their loyalty to former Premier Kak, support for accession to Pakistan, or opposition to National Conference in the past. Responsible jobs were filled by Nationalists or the relatives of the Nationalist leaders who possessed no qualifications or experience for these posts. Many of the recruits were under-educated when senior qualified men existed in the departments. Supersessions, dismissals, premature retirements and degradations became order of the day in almost

all the departments of administration. Even the judiciary could not remain unaffected by party influence.

Frightened by the depredations of the tribesmen on the one side and the Indian soldiers on the other, harassed by the upstart Nationalists everywhere thousands of the State people left their homes in winter 1947-48 to take refuge outside their beloved motherland—Hindus and Sikhs in India and Muslims in Pakistn. The exodus continued unabated for many months. To a small extent it is going on to this day. It was estimated at the end of the year 1948 that no less than three hundred thousand people had been uprooted and had left the country.

Through ages Kashmir had afforded shelter and asylum to men of diverse religious beliefs and political views who were persecuted and tyrannised in their own homelands. But now she had become unsafe even for her own children. It was not an entirely new experience. During the days of wicked rulers victimised Kashmiris used to leave the Valley but the exodus of three hundred thousand people was unprecedented in the annals of Kashmir.

And when the country was enveloped in this tragedy and miserable plight, when the nation was bleeding, the Nationalists had the callousness to celebrate the "Freedom Week" in May 1948. What a heartless and diabolical celebration it was !

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

RED SHADOW OVER THE NATIONALISTS

WITH the occupation of the country by the Indian armies and the installation in power of the Nationalists, Kashmir was totally enveloped by turmoil. There were conflicts and clashes of religious, economic as well as political nature in all parts of the State. The country became a fertile ground for disruption and the growth of cynical ideas, perverted views and anti-democratic theories. And the Communists started to fish in the troubled waters.

The Communist Party of India had turned its attention to Kashmir as early as 1937 when two prominent Moscow-trained workers from Lahore, Professor Abdullah Safdar and Fazal Illahi Qurban, visited the Valley by turns and contacted some leaders of the, then, Muslim Conference who were believed to possess leftist leanings. Both of them actively worked in Srinagar for several weeks but in spite of their best endeavours they failed to achieve any tangible results. Kashmir leaders evinced little interest in the mission of the Indian Communists. For some years thereafter the Communist Party suspended further organised attempts in this direction though individual Communist leaders used to pay occasional visits to the Valley. One of such casual visitors was B. P. L. Bedi who proved successful by the end of 1942 to win over the sympathies of Abdullah and Ghulam Mohammed Sadiq to the Communist faith. Another distinguished leader of the party who became friendly with the Kashmir Nationalists was Dr. K. M. Ashraf.

After the conversion of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference in 1939 greater stress began to be laid on economic and the social side of the Kashmir Freedom Movement. It gave birth to several groups espousing different ideologies based on revolutionary social and economic doctrines.

The Indian Communists also found a more congenial atmosphere to renew their efforts for spread of their views in the State.

During the first phase of the Second World War and so long as the Russo-German alliance lasted, the Government of India considered the Communists as agents of the enemy. Many of them were arrested and kept in detention; many others remained underground. Those who had formed acquaintance with the National Conference leaders came to Kashmir and got shelter here. It afforded an opportunity to them to sow the seeds of the new ideology in the Valley. Sadiq became the first convert and Abdullah a fellow traveller.

Early in 1942 the Communist Party of India commissioned one Niranjan Nath Raina, a Kashmiri Pandit young man, who had been trained at different Communist centres for the job, to work for the party in the Valley. Raina had been indoctrinated with the philosophy of communism while studying in the Allahabad University. On his return to home-land he became the staunchest propagandist of the creed. Through his efforts the party gained dozens of adherents among the intelligentsia of the Pandits.

The Communists did not start any branch of their party inside the State. Instead they infiltrated into the ranks of the National Conference and the allied bodies such as the Students Federation, the Youth League and the Trade Unions which were run by the Nationalists. Getting encouragement from Abdullah and Sadiq they attempted to spread their tentacles far and wide. But till 1947 they could not make any headway either in enlisting the sympathies of the rank and file in the National Conference or among the working classes in general. Nevertheless they managed to earn the blind confidence of Abdullah and through him they effectively influenced the views, the policy and the working of the Nationalist organisation. It is said that the New Kashmir Plan which the National Conference adopted as the objective of the party in 1943 was drafted by B. P. L. Bedi. That may or may not be true but the hand of Communists can surely be seen in the preparation of

the manifesto by an examination of its contents. There could be no more any doubt that the Nationalist leaders were deriving inspiration from the communist source. By 1946 Abdullah had two sets of advisers pulling him in two opposite directions. He was simultaneously guided by the Gandhists as well as by the Communists. Abdullah has never been quite clear in his mind about the goal of the Kashmir Freedom Movement. He cherishes hazy notions about the future of the Valley and his thinking is often muddled. His behaviour is extraordinarily influenced by the environments in which he lives. He is moved more by sentiment than by reason. He never cared to critically study the ideologies, the professions and the practices of the different political parties functioning in the subcontinent of India. In his blessed ignorance he though that he could carry both the Congressmen and the Communists with him. Therefore thoughtlessly he, while still swearing by Gandhism, welcomed the Communists and helped them to spread their ideology, establish their cells and infiltrate into the ranks of the National Conference.

But it became increasingly difficult to work harmoniously and to act according to the contradictory advice given by the Congress patrons and the Communist friends. Adoption of the New Kashmir Plan brought the conflict to the open. The difficulty was however solved by the Nationalists accepting the Maharaja as the Head of the Communist State to please the Congressmen. The next test came when Abdullah launched the Quit Kashmir movement at the advice of the Communists to regain the lost popularity of the Nationalist Party. As we know the Congress leaders strongly disapproved of it and some of them even condemned the agitation in no uncertain terms. Abdullah had to eat his own words before the court trying him for sedition which the Communists resented. But in 1946 the Reds were not entrenched in State politics to be able to challenge the Nationalist leader. They were conscious of the fact that at that stage they were more dependent on him than he was on them. Wisely therefore they decided to bide their time.

RED SHADOW OVER THE NATIONALISTS

The upheaval of 1947 and the coming to power of the Nationalists with Abdullah as the Prime Minister of the State afforded the Communists a better chance and greater scope for their work. Now they had immense opportunities before them. While all other political parties and progressive elements were ruthlessly suppressed in the State, Communists enjoyed fullest freedom of expression and action. They were placed in charge of many key positions in the administration. To begin with, B. P. L. Bedi became the Adviser-in-Chief of Abdullah. During the days of Emergency Administration and two years thereafter he was in charge of the Counter-Propaganda Department of the Kashmir Government. His wife Freda Bedi was associated with many official activities. She was the most important member of the Text Book Committee which prepared and published books for use in the State schools. G.M. Sadiq, by now a self-confessed Communist, became first the Development Minister and subsequently the President of the Constituent-Assembly. Abdullah's Cabinet included such other Communists or fellow travellers as D. P. Dhar (Deputy Minister) and Girdhari Lal Dogra who held the portfolios of Home and Finance respectively. Some newly appointed secretaries to the Government such as Mir Qasim and G. R. Renzoo and many gazetted officers in almost all departments were also Communists or fellow travellers. A few young officers of the National Militia, which was raised to defend the State against the tribesmen, were if not Communists themselves favourably inclined towards communism. Through them cheap Communist literature was supplied and circulated among subordinate ranks of the National Militia.

With their prestige thus enhanced in the Government the Communists devoted all their energies to the capture of the National Conference organisation. By 1950 there remained hardly any branch of the Conference in Srinagar and the big towns in the State which did not include a Communist or a fellow traveller as its active and influential member. Dozens of Communists joined the Peace Brigade, a semi-official organi-

sation, established by the Nationalists to suppress commotions and disturbances inside the State.

In the winter of 1947-48 guns, rifles and other war weapons and ammunition, secured from India, were freely distributed among the Nationalist workers to fight against tribesmen and Azad Kashmir forces. A large portion of these was captured by the Communists. Reportedly it is still lying intact with them for future use.

The Communists resorted to familiar practices to hoodwink the people and bring them under the red banner. In 1948 they started the Cultural Front ostensibly for the renaissance of the indigenous art and literature of the State, but really to recruit more and more educated people into their ranks. All the local poets, artists and writers were invited to join the Front which was financed by the Nationalist Government. But the anti-Pakistan and pro-Russia propaganda done in the name of the cultural resurgence was so crude and clumsy that most of the writers became disgusted with it and the Front broke to pieces. Subsequently the Communists started another body called the Progressive Writers League in which only advocates of Communism and supporters of the Nationalist regime were enlisted as members. The organisation has three journals, *Kung Posh* (The Saffron Flower), *Mashal* (The Torch) and *Azad*, all monthlies, from Srinagar.

Time and again Abdullah was warned by both his own sincere admirers and opponents, of the disruptionist and perfidious role which the Communists were playing in the Freedom Movement of Kashmir. But he simply scoffed at the charges and treated them lightly. Indeed the more the well-wishers of the State tried to bring the sinister ways of the Communists to light the more did Abdullah defend them and provide them with bigger opportunities for work. The Reds captured the entire mainland of China in summer 1948. A little later they reached the borders of Kashmir in the North through Sinkiang and in the East through Tibet. This made the Kashmir Nationalist leader more enthusiastic than ever before to welcome communism as an ally in his fight for power. When the Korea War

broke out in June 1950, Abdullah jumped on the band wagon of the Communists and delivered speeches justifying their policy. With his approval demonstrations were arranged to support the so-called peace appeal of the Communists. Meetings were held in almost all districts in this connection under the auspices of the National Conference. A procession was also taken out headed by G. M. Sadiq through the streets of Srinagar in spring 1950. As we shall see in this way Abdullah brought about his own downfall.

Having started his political career as a fighter for the emancipation of the Muslim masses Abdullah, despite his fulminations, outbursts and protestations against Pakistan and the two-nation theory of the Muslim League, was tortured by that silent inner voice which appeared to constantly reprimand him for making alliance with the Hindu India. The post-partition developments in the subcontinent proved enough cause for him to worry about. But in the merry-making that followed the installation in power of the Nationalists the stern realities of the situation were drowned. However before long it became manifest that the State Muslims were deeply resentful and sullen over Kashmir's accession to India. It was also clear that Pakistan had come to stay and did not cease to exist under pressure of economic, administrative or political difficulties as had been prophesied before 15th August 1947 by the Hindu wiseacres and on which false hope the Kashmir Nationalists had made their suicidal decision. Abdullah passed through a spiritual crisis. He was confused more than ever and needed some psychological and moral support to march ahead. This was given to him by his Communist friends. Equipped with the familiar arguments they taught Abdullah the philosophy that bloodshed was revolution, suppression was emancipation, democrats were enemies of freedom and tolerance was weakness of character. These new ideas were a source of comfort to the drooping spirit of the Nationalist leader and for preaching them he afforded every opportunity to the Communists.

The policy pursued by the Reds in supporting Abdullah

to crush freedom-loving elements was not disapproved by the Government of India. It was surely liked by the Hindus. But in 1948-49 Jawaharlal Nehru was not in the good books of Kremlin as he has become now due to his policy of neutrality in foreign affairs. The Russian Press and the Moscow Radio frequently criticised Nehru five years ago as an ally of the Anglo-American imperialists and vigorously denounced some of his actions. In India a campaign was launched by the Government in 1948 against the Reds when thousands of them were arrested all over the country particularly in Hyderabad (Deccan) for their violent rebellion in Telangana. The Communists therefore deemed it advisable to keep Kashmir State as much aloof from India as possible. Abdullah was told that it would prove ruinous if a Muslim State like Kashmir integrated with the Hindu Dominion of India. At every possible intervention by the Central Government he was cautioned not to give way. The best course for Kashmir to adopt, the Communists suggested, was to remain independent for the present and neither join India nor Pakistan. Of course it was assumed that at the ripe moment the State would decide to form part of U.S.S.R. under which alone the Kashmir Nationalist leaders could implement the revolutionary New Kashmir Plan. The ulterior motive of the Communists was to make Kashmir the Yenan of India. The scheme was plausible and Abdullah was duped to believe that this plan was not fantastic. The borders of Kashmir are as much contiguous with U.S.S.R. and China as with India and Pakistan. So if need arose it would not be very difficult to import weapons and war material to equip the Nationalist guerrillas to fight for the freedom of the country. In the opinion of the Communists integration of the State with either of the two Dominions would be enslavement for it but incorporation with Russia meant complete freedom.

Feeling convinced what the Communists said was correct and obviously under their inspiration, Abdullah demanded independence for Kashmir in April, 1949 in an exclusive interview with Mr. Michael Davidson of the London *Observer*

foreign news service. "Accession to either side cannot bring peace", he told the correspondent. "We want to live in friendship with both the Dominions. Perhaps a middle path between them with economic co-operation with each will be the only way of doing it. However, an independent Kashmir must be guaranteed not only by India and Pakistan but also by Great Britain, the United States and other members of the United Nations". In reply to a question Abdullah said he believed the Poonchis would welcome inclusion in an independent Kashmir but if after its establishment they chose to secede and join Pakistan he would raise no objection. He wanted a solution fair to all the three parties—Pakistan, India and the people of Kashmir. He added: "We won't submit to communal solution. There has never been a religious problem in the Vale of Kashmir. Hindus and Muslims are of the same racial origin, wear the same clothes and speak the same language. Ours is a fight against autocracy. That is why our sympathies are with the Indian Congress. But accession either way would provoke strife. If Kashmir went to India, Pakistan would want to fight. If she went to Pakistan a ghastly exodus of Hindus would begin all over again".

Abdullah's new-fangled views were unpalatable to his Indian masters. As at the time of Quit Kashmir agitation the Congress leaders thought their Kashmir friend had let them down. He was at once summoned to New Delhi where in a Press Conference on 18th May 1949 he was made to withdraw his observations. "It is absurd to say", Abdullah declared emphatically, "that Kashmir still thinks of any other alternative so far as the question of accession is concerned. What we want is peace and prosperity for our people. Independence may be and is a charming idea, but is it practical too? Can a small country like Kashmir, with its limited resources, maintain it? Are all the countries concerned in a proper political temper at the present moment to give their willing and sincere assent to it? After a formal declaration of independence, shall we not be making Kashmir a victim of some unscrupulous and

powerful country ? That will be a great betrayal of the cause we have stood for all these years".

Abdullah's withdrawal annoyed the Communists but they were still not in a position to measure swords with him. They had not yet entrenched themselves securely in Kashmir politics. So discreetly they continued to outwardly support him as "the real leader of the four million people of Jammu and Kashmir"; inwardly however they started preparations to pave the way for capture of power by themselves. From unconditional supporters of the Nationalist Government they became its critical allies. In an insidious manner they held the Nationalist leaders responsible for all the ills from which the people were suffering and took the credit for the agrarian and other reforms which were introduced by the Kashmir Government. And they decided to patiently wait for the day when they could throw out Abdullah and his adherents.

Meanwhile the Reds took the fullest advantage of the opportunity that had come their way in the State owing to the opportunism and stupidity of Abdullah. Not only did they make great efforts to strengthen their ranks and enhance their prestige in the public life, they also collected all facts and figures about the past and present economic, political and strategic position of the State by reference to the official records which came into their possession by virtue of the key positions held by them. It was reported that many documents of important nature were copied for transmission to foreign lands. In certain cases complete files were said to have been seized upon and removed from the records.

Outside the Governmental circles and the Nationalist ranks the Communists were not able to enlist much sympathy. Neither the peasantry nor the working classes have been influenced by them to any appreciable extent. The reason is this. Most of the members of the Communist group in the State are Hindus. Despite their Marxism they have not forsaken their communal prejudices and they want Kashmir to accede to India if it must elect to join either of the two countries. Such attitude towards the important issue of the present-day Kashmir has made the

Communists unpopular among the Muslims—the preponderating majority in all classes of Kashmiris. As a matter of fact there was a rift in the group in 1950 when the majority of the Muslim members under the leadership of Mohi-ud-Din Kara left the fold on this issue. The Indian Communists of course sided with the Hindu faction. The activities of the workers of the Socialist Party and the Kisan Mazdoor Conference also have thwarted the progress of the Communists. Partly owing to the opposition of the democratic forces but mainly because of their unpopular stand regarding the accession dispute they were not able to make any conspicuous advance among the people of the Valley. They are conscious of their weakness but true to their philosophy and practice in other countries they hope to capture power by a coup at the appropriate time. For that reason of all the people in the State Communists are least desirous that there should be an early settlement of the accession dispute.

The Communists are fully aware of the fact how the disturbed conditions have proved to their advantage. They have been therefore the loudest in denouncing the U. N., or, for the matter of that, any other efforts for settlement. They become sick at heart when a ray of hope to end the Kashmir imbroglio becomes visible. At such times they create imaginary fears and unfounded suspicions among the people. Communists also know that the fall of the present regime with the declaration of the free will of the Kashmir people will mean termination of many undue and illegitimate privileges enjoyed by them. Nothing would therefore please them more than that India and Pakistan should continue to disagree on ways of demilitarisation of the State. If the disturbed conditions continue for long and all progressive and patriotic elements remain suppressed, Communists are sure to reap a good harvest in time to come.

The Kashmir Reds are no believers in the motto that "Communists disdain to hide their thoughts". They hotly contested that there was any Communist faction inside the National Conference or that they were conspiring to overthrow Abdullah and his supporters because they did not act according to dictates from men at Kremlin. Almost all of them even declared

that they were not even Communists. This was considered a political strategy. To the Reds end justifies the means. If the objective of capturing power can be achieved by hiding the identity of the group and its members Communists see no harm in sailing under false colours. When his attention was drawn to the fact that he was the vice-president of the All-India Peace Committee, Sadiq observed that it had no significance because that Committee was not a communist body. But the speeches of the Kashmir Communist leaders are being broadcast from the Moscow Radio. And in 1952, Sadiq wanted to go of all places in the world, to Russia for medical (and also spiritual) treatment of his ailments. Do these facts also carry no significance ?

The story how the Communists conspired to bring about the fall of Abdullah will be told at its proper place. Suffice here to mention that the fall was of his own making. Communists are nobody's friends but their own. Abdullah realized this truth but then it was too late. And unwittingly he introduced a virus in State politics the gravity and far-reaching effects of which are yet to be realized by the people of India and the world at large.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

A PAWN IN POWER POLITICS

EARLY in January 1948 the Government of India approached the Security Council of the U.N.O. for help to solve the Kashmir problem. Its lengthy representation to the Council contained the Indian version of the issue. The Government of India contended that the State of Jammu and Kashmir had legally and constitutionally acceded to India as not only the ruler but also Sheikh Abdullah, the leader of the popular party, had signed the Instrument of Accession. But armed tribesmen from trans-Pakistan border, the representation complained, had raided the State from the North West. These raiders, India alleged, were coming through the Pakistan territory and had in fact established bases inside that country. The Indian Government demanded that either Pakistan be asked to refrain from helping the raiders in their aggressive designs or if that Government was unable to do so for any reason the Indian Military be allowed to destroy the installations of the hostile tribesmen.

Probably aware of the fact that its case was not so neat or simple and when its complaint was taken up in the Council the real causes of the dispute might come to light, the Government of India in anticipation simultaneously made an offer in the representation that the future of the State of Jammu and Kashmir was to be finally decided by the method of a plebiscite under the supervision of the U.N. This offer was in accordance with the declaration of Premier Nehru. "We have declared that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people. That pledge we have given. The Maharaja has supported it and we give it again, not only to the people of Kashmir but to the whole world. We want it to be a fair and just referendum and we shall accept the verdict".[1] When the issue came up before the Security Council India was represented by N. Gopalaswami

1. Broadcast speech of Nehru on November 2, 1947.

Ayyengar, a former Premier of Kashmir,whom Nehru had earlier taken as a member of his Cabinet. He was accompanied by Abdullah. Sir Zaffarullah Khan, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, spoke for the other side. The fighting in the State was still in progress. The Security Council dealt with the matter promptly and before the month was out decided to send a commission to help both India and Pakistan end the hostilities and create conditions for a plebiscite to get, as India had suggested, the issue finally settled. This decision of the Council was befitting the international organisation as it had, instead of dealing with the superficialities, gone direct to the very core of the problem.

Surprisingly it was that India took objection to this decision and N. Gopalaswami Ayyengar hurried back to New Delhi to secure "fresh instructions" from Nehru's Government. On his return the Security Council, having heard both the sides, adopted a lengthy resolution on the 21st April, 1948 laying down in great detail how and under what conditions the plebiscite was to be held to make it fair and impartial. The Council was strongly of the opinion that "early restoration of peace and order in Jammu and Kashmir is essential" and that "India and Pakistan should do their utmost to bring about cessation of all fighting". The Council noted with satisfaction that "both India and Pakistan desire that the question of accession of Jammu and Kashmir should be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite." The Council considered "the continuation of the dispute as likely to endanger international peace and security" and therefore "instructed the Commission of five members to proceed at once to the subcontinent and then place its good offices and mediation at the disposal of the Governments of India and Pakistan with a view to facilitating the taking of necessary measures both with respect to the restoration of peace and order and to the holding of a plebiscite"

The resolution specifically mentioned in detail the appropriate measures which in the opinion of the Council could bring about the cessation of fighting and create proper conditions for a free and impartial plebiscite.

This resolution was found unacceptable by the Government of India but acceptable by the Pakistan Government. The Commission, however, reached the subcontinent in the beginning of July 1948. Its task was not an easy one. The Commissioners held prolonged discussions and deliberations with the leaders of both the Governments. It was evident that they were facing tremendous difficulties in the performance of their duties. What made it almost impossible to achieve any success was a new factor which came to the knowledge of the Commission on their arrival in India. Pakistan had repeatedly asserted before the Security Council that she had no hand in the Kashmir War. But soon after arrival the Commission was informed by Pakistan that her armies also had been forced to join the fighting and defend their country by entering deep into the borders of the Kashmir State. This was a material change in the situation and it embarrassed the U.N. Commission. However the Commission boldly carried on the talks with both the Governments for more than a fortnight and on the 13th of August submitted the following proposals to them for acceptance:

PART I

CEASE-FIRE ORDER

(a) The Governments of India and Pakistan agree that their respective High Commands will issue separately and simultaneously a cease-fire order to apply to all forces under their control in the State of Jammu and Kashmir at the earliest practicable date or dates to be mutually agreed upon within four days after these proposals have been accepted by both Governments.

(b) The High Commands of the Indian and Pakistan Forces agree to refrain from taking any measures that might augment the military potential of the forces under their control in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

For the purpose of these proposals "Forces under their control" shall be considered to include all forces, organised and unorganised, fighting or participating in hostilities on their respective sides.

(c) The Commanders-in-Chief of India and Pakistan shall promptly confer regarding any necessary local changes in present dispositions, which may facilitate the cease-fire.

(d) In its discretion and as the Commission may find practicable, the Commission will appoint military observers who, under the authority of

the Commission and with the co-operation of both Commands, will supervise the observance of the cease-fire order.

(e) The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan agree to appeal to their respective peoples to assist in creating and maintaining an atmosphere favourable to the promotion of further negotiations.

PART II
TRUCE AGREEMENT

Simultaneously with the acceptance of the proposal for immediate cessation of hostilities as outlined in part I, both Governments accept the following principles as a basis for the formation of a truce agreement, the details of which shall be worked out in discussion between their representatives and the Commission.

(a) 1. As the presence of troops of Pakistan in the territory of the State of Jammu and Kashmir constitutes a material change in the situation since it was represented by the Government of Pakistan before the Security Council, the Government of Pakistan agrees to withdraw its troops from the State.

2. The Government of Pakistan will use its best endeavour to secure the withdrawal from the State of Jammu and Kashmir of tribesmen and Pakistan nationals not normally resident therein who have entered the State for the purpose of fighting.

3. Pending a final solution, the territory evacuated by the Pakistan troops will be administered by the local authorities under the surveillance of the Commission.

(b) 1. When the Commission shall have notified the Government of India that the tribesmen and Pakistan nationals referred to in Part II (a) (2) hereof have withdrawn, thereby terminating the situation which was represented by the Government of India to the Security Council as having occasioned the presence of Indian forces in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, and further that the Pakistan forces are being withdrawn from the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the Government of India agrees to begin to withdraw the bulk of their forces from the State in stages to be agreed upon with the Commission.

2. Pending the acceptance of the conditions for a final settlement of the situation in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the Indian Government will maintain within the lines existing at the moment of the case-fire those forces of its army which in agreement with the Commission are considered necessary to assist local authorities in the observance of law and order. The Commission will have observers stationed where it deems necessary.

3. The Government of India will undertake to ensure that the Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir will take all

measures within their power to make it publicly known that peace, law and order will be safeguarded and that all human and political rights will be guaranteed.

(C) 1. Upon signature, the full text of the truce agreement or a *communique* containing the principles thereof as agreed upon between the two Governments and the Commission, will be made public.

PART III

The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan re-affirm their wish that the future status of the State of Jammu and Kashmir shall be determined in accordance with the will of the people and to that end, upon acceptance of the truce agreement both Governments agree to enter into consultations with the Commission to determine fair and equitable conditions whereby such free expression will be assured.

These proposals were acceptable to India but Pakistan was unwilling to give her final word of acceptance unless she was assured of certain interpretations to the words contained in the proposals. This needed further negotiations with both the parties. After many strenuous efforts first in India and afterwards in Paris during the General Session of the U. N. the Commissioners were able to bring the two Governments round to agree on cease-fire and the holding of an impartial and a fair plebiscite to solve the Kashmir issue. In the last week of December both the Governments accepted not only the above mentioned proposals of the Commission but also the following principles which were formulated by the Commission subsequently and which are supplementary to the proposals of the 13th August. These principles were adopted by the Commission in a resolution on the 5th January, 1949 :

"1. The question of accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India or Pakistan will be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite.

2. A plebiscite will be held when it shall be found by the Commission that the cease-fire and truce agreement set forth in parts I and II of the Commission's Resolution of August 13, 1948, have been carried out and arrangements for the plebiscite have been completed.

3. (a) The Secretary-General of the United Nations will, in agreement with the Commission, nominate a Plebiscite Administrator who shall be a personality of high international standing and commanding general confidence. He will be formally appointed to office by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

(b) The Plebiscite Administrator shall derive from the State of Jammu and Kashmir the powers he considers necessary for organizing and conducting the plebiscite and for ensuring the freedom and impartiality of the plebiscite.

(c) The Plebiscite Administrator shall have authority to appoint such staff or assistants and observers as he may require.

4. (a) After implementation of Parts I and II of the Commission's Resolution of August 13, 1948, and when the Commission is satisfied that peaceful conditions have been restored in the State, the Commission and the Plebiscite Administrator will determine in consultation with the Government of India the final disposal of Indian and State Armed Forces. Such disposal to be with due regard to the security of the State and the freedom of the plebiscite.

(b) As regards the territory referred to in A (2) of Part II of the Resolution of August 13, 1948, final disposal of the armed forces in that territory will be determined by the Commission and the Plebiscite Administrator in consultation with the local authorities.

5. All civil and military authorities within the State and the principal political elements of the State will be required to co-operate with the Plebiscite Administrator in the preparation for and holding of the plebiscite.

6. (a) All citizens of the State who have left it on account of the disturbances will be invited and free to return and to exercise all their rights as such citizens. For the purpose of facilitating repatriation there shall be appointed two commissions, one composed of nominees of India and the other of nominees of Pakistan. The commissions shall operate under the direction of the Plebiscite Administrator. The Governments of India and Pakistan and all authorities within the State of Jammu and Kashmir will collaborate with the Plebiscite Administrator in putting this provision into effect.

(b) All persons (other than the citizens of the State) who on or since August 15, 1947, have entered it for other than lawful purpose shall be required to leave the State.

7. All authorities within the State of Jammu and Kashmir will undertake to ensure in collaboration with the Plebiscite Administrator that (a) there is no threat, coercion or intimidation, bribery or other influence on the voters in the plebiscite; (b) no restrictions are placed on legitimate political activity throughout the State. All subjects of the State regardless of creed, caste or party shall be safe and free in expressing their views and in voting on the question of the accession

of the State to India or Pakistan. There shall be freedom of the Press, speech and assembly and freedom of travel in the State including freedom of lawful entry and exit; (c) all political prisoners are released ; (d) minorities in all parts of the State are accorded adequate protection; and (e) there is no victimization.

8. The Plebiscite Administrator may refer to the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan problems on which he may require assistance and the Commission may, in its discretion, call upon the Plebiscite Administrator to carry out on its behalf any of the responsibilities with which it has been entrusted.
9. At the conclusion of the plebiscite the Plebiscite Administrator shall report the result thereof to the Commission and to the Government of Jammu and Kashmir. The Commission shall then certify to the Security Council whether the plebiscite has or has not been free and impartial.
10. Upon the signature of the truce agreement the details of the foregoing proposal will be elaborated in the consultations envisaged in Part III of the Commission's Resolution of August 13, 1948. The Plebiscite Administrator will be fully associated in these consultations."

Acceptance of these proposals and principles by India and Pakistan was a great achievement to the credit of the U.N. It was a brilliant success for those who pinned their faith in settlement of international disputes by peaceful methods of negotiation and mediation. It immediately brought the two warring nations, India and Pakistan, nearer to each other. And above all it meant tremendous victory for the democratic forces in the Jammu and Kashmir State because the accession dispute was to be settled by the method of a fair and impartial plebiscite. When this agreement was published and the cease-fire implemented on New Year's Day (1st January 1949), four days before the proposals and the principles were confirmed by the U.N. Commission in its meeting, everyone believed that the end of Kashmir dispute was in sight and before long the four million people living in the unfortunate State would attain liberation. This hope was strengthened when in the beginning of April both the Governments of India and Pakistan approved the nomination of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz as the Plebiscite Administrator as was required under the provisions of the agreement. But it appeared that while the Government of India was

quite eager to get the cease-fire effected it did not evince any more interest in getting the remaining provisions of the agreement implemented promptly. So when the Commission returned to the subcontinent to discharge the responsibilities imposed upon it by the proposals of August 13, 1948, and the foregoing principles, it immediately met with difficulties. It must be admitted that for some of these the Commission itself was responsible. In the correspondence that passed between the Commission and the two Governments about the interpretation of the proposals and the principles in one important matter there was some ambiguity in the two different versions which had been given to the two Governments. While in a letter to the Pakistan Government the Commission had categorically stated that its resolution of August 13, 1948 "does not contemplate the disarming or disbanding of the Azad Kashmir forces", Dr. Lozano, the President of the Commission, told Pandit Nehru in a talk on December 22, 1948 that the phrase "large scale disarming of the Azad Kashmir forces should be regarded as correctly interpreting the Commission's intentions". An Aide Memoire of this talk had been maintained which was signed by Dr. Lozano. This led to an unending controversy about the correct interpretation of the agreed proposals which totally occupied the Commission till it remained in existence.

The Commission left no stone unturned to make the two Governments agree to one interpretation. But it met with constant failure in its endeavours. Not only did India insist on the large-scale disarming of the Azad Kashmir forces, she also put forth a claim that she had a right to garrison the northern areas of the State which were held by the Pakistan Forces.

Meanwhile after many months of discussions between the Military Commands of India and Pakistan under the presidentship of General Delvoi, Military Advisor to the U.N.C.I.P., an agreement was signed in Karachi on 17th July 1949 laying down the details of the cease-fire line which partitioned the State of Jammu and Kashmir into two—one constituting the areas occupied by the Indian Forces and the other held by the Military of Pakistan.

The Commission devised various methods to get truce terms settled and accepted by the two Governments but these attempts came to nothing. As a last resort the Commission submitted a memorandum on August 30, 1949 to both the parties in the course of which a suggestion was made that the differences over the interpretation may be solved through arbitration. The relevant portions of the memorandum may be cited *verbatim*:

"(i) The two Governments agree :

(a) That they will submit to arbitration differences existing between them concerning all questions raised by them regarding implementation of article II of the Resolution of August 13, 1948, the arbitrator to decide these questions according to equity, and his decisions to be binding on both parties;

(b) That the arbitration will terminate once the truce terms are decided upon;

(c) That Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz will be the arbitrator

(d) That procedure for the arbitration will be worked out subsequently;

(e) Since the procedure of arbitration will be limited to the conclusion of a truce, the Commission will continue in the exercise of its functions. Upon an arbitral decision the Commission will undertake the tasks assigned to it under the truce and under the Resolution of January 5, 1949.

(ii) With reference to paragraph (i) (d) above, the Commission considers that it would be inappropriate in advance of approval by the parties of the proposed course of action and of the person of the arbitrator, to seek to define exact procedure to be followed.

The Commission recommends this course of action as an effective means of overcoming the obstacles which have so far stood in the way of the implementation of the truce agreement If accepted by the two Governments, the Commission is confident that the implementation of the truce agreement will be speedily begun, and that the Commission and the two Governments will be placed in a position to pursue their respective tasks leading to the final settlement of the problem, the continued existence of which is a source of grave concern not only to both Governments but also to the other member States of the U. N."

Immediately after the memorandum was submitted by the Commission to the two Governments Mr. Attlee, Prime Minister of Britain, and Mr. Truman, President of U.S.A., sent personal appeals to both the Governments to accept the proposal for arbi-

tration so that the Kashmir dispute might be solved and threat to international peace removed.

Had India accepted the suggestion of the Commission to get the interim differences about the interpretation of the accepted agreements solved through arbitration it would have become easy to create an atmosphere for the holding of a fair and impartial plebiscite in the State. But by now the extremists in India were determined to block the way to settlement. While Pakistan agreed to accept the proposed arbitration, India rejected it and what is worse Nehru deliberately confused the issue by repeatedly stating that the arbitration was meant to decide the future of the State which was undemocratic and entirely unacceptable. It will be seen from the wording of the proposal quoted above that the arbitration had absolutely nothing to do with the future of the State which was to be decided through the method of a plebiscite. It was only propsoed to clear the differences about interpretation to the agreements embodied in the two resolutions of the U.N.C.I.P. Yet Nehru as well as the Kashmir Nationalists, confused the mind of the people by saying that the arbitration was proposed to settle the future of the State.

India's refusal to accept arbitration on minor points sounded insincere because only two years earlier Mr. Sen, the Indian delegate at U.N., urged the Netherlands in the Security Council, on 8th August, 1947, to accept the International Arbitration Commission to resolve the Indonesian deadlock. But when it came to himself Nehru said it was derogatory to a sovereign nation to accept arbitration. Was not the Netherlands a sovereign nation ? The Kashmir National Conference in a resolution which was adopted at its annual session held on 27th September, 1949, characterised the suggestion for arbitration as "yet another device to deny justice to the people of Kashmir". The resolution said that "as custodian of the destiny of four million people of Jammu and Kashmir the National Conference wishes to state emphatically that under no circumstances whatsoever can it surrender the right of the people of the State to take a free decision about the future of our country".

In these circumstances the U.N.C.I.P. felt that they could serve no useful purpose by remaining in the subcontinent. Therefore M. Carlos Leguizzaman, Chairman, and three other members of the Commission, Robert Macatee, Harnando Sampur and W.S. Williams, left on September 27 for Geneva to write a report on their work for the Security Council. On the eve of their departure the Commission issued a statement in which they threw some revealing light on the talks that Dr. Lozano had with Premier Nehru on December 20, 1948 in connection with the cease-fire proposals and principles. The statement said :

> "It is important to keep in mind that these conversations related exclusively to an elaboration of part III of the Resolution of August 13, 1948. Parts I and II were not affected."

Thus the demand of India that the disarming of Azad forces should be included in the truce agreement was not justified. Most probably this was the reason why Nehru was so reluctant to accept the arbitration. He knew the weakness of his case too well.

The U.N.C.I.P. submitted its report to the Security Council on 12th December, 1949. It recommended the appointment of a mediator to bring India and Pakistan together on all unresolved issues over Kashmir. The Commission expressed its doubts whether the five-member-Commission was "the most flexible and desirable instrument to continue in the task". It suggested that the Security Council give one person "broad authority in an endeavour on all unresolved issues". The Commission also recommended that the Council consult with representatives of India and Pakistan "to arrive at terms of reference for its representative including consultation regarding the scope of his authority to settle eventually by arbitration those issues involved in the demilitarisation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir as may remain outstanding which impede the creation of conditions for the plebiscite". The Commission also recommended that the Security Council ask both India and Pakistan to "take all necessary precautions to secure that their agreements regarding the cease-fire be faithfully observed"

The major portion of the report was devoted to the statement of the views of India and Pakistan on the terms of the truce. The Commission however concluded by saying that "the entry of Indian forces into the area north of the cease-fire line would almost inevitably lead to a renewal of hostilities".

After hearing what the Commission had to say while submitting its report and what the spokesmen of India and Pakistan had to say about the recommendations, the Security Council on December 17, 1949, asked its own President, General McNaughton, to make an attempt to bring the parties to an agreement. The General discussed the differences with the two delegations of India and Pakistan at Lake Success and after spending days in deliberations and in consultations with his own advisers formulated a plan which he sent to the parties for acceptance. The Plan was as follows :

"1. The principal considerations underlying the following proposals of the President of the Council of the U.N. are :

(a) To determine the future ot Jammu and Kashmir by the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite to take place as early as possible.

(b) Thus to settle this issue between the Governments of India and Pakistan in accordance with the freely expressed will of the inhabitants, as is desired by both Governments.

(c) To preserve the substantial measure of agreement on fundamental principles which have already been reached between the two Governments under the auspices of the U.N.

(d) To avoid unprofitable discussion of disputed issues of the past, and to look forward to the future towards the good-neighbourly and constructive co-operation of the two great nations.

DEMILITARIZATION PREPARATORY TO THE PLEBISCITE :

2. There would be an agreed programme of progressive demilitarization, the basic principle of which should be the reduction of armed forces on either side of the cease-fire line by withdrawal, disbandment and disarmament in such stages as not to cause fear at any point of time to the people on either side of the cease-fire line.

The aim should be to reduce the armed personnel in the State of Jammu and Kashmir on each side of the cease-fire line to the minimum compatible with the maintenance of security and of local law and order, and to a level sufficiently low and with the forces so disposed that they will not constitute a restriction on the free expression of opinion for the purpose of the plebiscite.

The programme of demilitarization should include the withdrawal from the State of Jammu and Kashmir of the regular forces of Pakistan, and the withdrawal of the regular forces of India not required for the purpose of security or for the maintenance of local law and order on the Indian side of the cease-fire line, also the reduction by disbanding and disarming of local forces, including on the one side the Armed Forces and Militia of the State of Kashmir and on the other the Azad Forces.

Administration of the northern area should, subject to U.N. supervision, be continued by the existing local authorities.

The Governments of India and Pakistan should reach agreement not later than January 31, 1950, in New York on the following points :

(a) The Government of Pakistan should give unconditional assurance to the Government of India that they will deal effectively within their own borders with any possibility of tribal incursion into Jammu and Kashmir to the end that under no circumstances tribesmen be able unlawfully to enter the State of Jammu and Kashmir from or through the territory of Pakistan.

The Government of Pakistan should undertake to keep the senior United Nations Military Observer informed and satisfy him that the arrangements to this end are, and continue to be, adequate.

(b) The Governments of India and Pakistan should confirm the continued and unconditional inviolability of the 'cease-fire line.'

(c) Agreement should be reached on the basic principles of demilitarization outlined in paragraph 2 above.

(d) Agreement should be reached on the minimum forces required for the maintenance of security and of local law and order and on their general disposition."

Both the Governments demanded explanations and made certain amendments to this plan. General McNaughton in a lengthy speech in the Security Council on 29th December cleared all the ambiguities. But finally the plan had to be discarded as it was unacceptable to India though it was accepted by Pakistan.

It was now time that the Security Council should have acted a little more firmly than it had been doing so far but when the matter came up for review it adopted a mild-worded resolution in the beginning of March 1950 terminating the U. N. Commission and appointing a U. N. Representative to assume its powers and responsibilities in Kashmir. The reso-

lution "called upon the Governments of India and Pakistan to make immediate arrangements, without prejudice to their rights or claims and with due regard to the requirements of law and order, to prepare and execute within a period of five months from the date of the adoption of this resolution a programme of demilitarization on the basis of the principles of General McNaughton's proposal, or of such modifications of those principles as may be mutually agreed upon"

The functions of the United Nations Representative were laid down as follows :

"(a) To assist in the preparation and to supervise the implementation of the programme of demilitarization referred to above and to interpret the agreements reached by the parties for demilitarization.

(b) To place himself at the disposal of the Governments of India and Pakistan and to place before those Governments, or the Security Council, any suggestions which, in his opinion, are likely to contribute to the expeditious and enduring solution of the dispute which has arisen between the two Governments in regard to the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

(c) To exercise all of the powers and responsibilities devolving upon the U.N. Commission by reason of the existing resolution of the Security Council and by reason of the agreement of the parties, embodied in the resolutions of the U.N. Commission of August 13, 1948, and January 5, 1949.

(d) To arrange at the appropriate stage of demilitarization for the assumption by the Plebiscite Administrator of the functions assigned to the latter under agreements made between the parties."

Sir Owen Dixon, a judge of the High Court of Australia, was appointed to the job of the U. N. Representative who arrived in New Delhi on May 21, 1950. Sir Owen applied himself to the onerous responsibilities in the right spirit of a reputable jurist that he is. He did his best to understand the problem and considered every detail and point of view in a dispassionate, objective and unbiased manner. For four months he shuttle-cocked between Delhi and Karachi to hold lengthy discussions with the leaders of the Governments of India and Pakistan. He visited the Jammu and Kashmir State on both sides of the cease-fire line and met important State leaders to

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

ON EVE OF PARTITION

IN the summer of 1945 the Nationalists began to realise that their opponents were becoming numerous and that they were alienated from the masses. In a public meeting in Pratap Park which was being addressed by Abdullah, there were not more than 123 people. The Nationalists were of the opinion that if they could secure more political power they would get the opportunity not only of doing constructive work but also of suppressing the elements in body politic hostile to them. During Sir B. Narsingh Rao's time, they made many attempts to persuade the Maharaja to hand over to their representative in the Cabinet such portfolios as Education, Panchayats, Revenue and Co-operative so that the prestige of the Party might be enhanced. But the Maharaja was not willing to do so. Firstly because it was not in the nature of Hari Singh to trust his "dear subjects" particularly the Muslims, he was loath to part with power and hand it over to representatives of the people with any semblance of popularity. Secondly (in fairness to him let it be said) he had misgivings as to how the Nationalists would use the power. The Valley was resounding with the cries of strident protests against the *goonda-ism* and gangsterism of the Nationalists. Was it right and politic that they should be given additional authority ? Would it not prove harmful for the people and unsafe for his throne ? Such questions were being repeatedly and daily asked in the local Press and must have been revolving in the mind of the ruler.

The appointment of Ram Chandra Kak as Prime Minister was hailed by the Nationalists and their Press. Having assured the Maharaja that they would welcome the appointment of Kak, the Nationalists expected privileges in return from the new Premier. This hope proved unfounded. Kak was egoistic

But India objected to it saying that the proposal would mean that the Government of the State would be superseded. Nehru also raised other usual objections that Pakistan was aggressor and security of the State would be endangered. Discussing these Sir Owen said in the report:

"It appeared to me that the danger to the freedom and fairness of the plebiscite could not be removed unless in the administrative hierarchy of the State so far as it controlled the plebiscite area United Nations officers were interposed temporarily. The authority of the Ministry over the rest of the State would not be affected. The ordinary working of the machinery of government in the plebiscite area would go on without change, but for the limited area the United Nations administrators would for the time being be responsible for the working of the machinery in order to see that it was not used to influence the voters, as otherwise it well might be in countless ways. Armed militia and police in the Valley did not appear to me to be favourable to a free expression of the people's will and I consider that the administrative body might be safely given powers to decide what was necessary to ensure the maintenance of order and to protect the area from external danger if they found that any existed.

I did not suppose that they would invoke Pakistan troops without good cause, but I saw no reason why both countries should not be under an obligation to provide troops if requested. I saw no reason to change the opinion I had formed or to depart from the provision I had intended to include. I could not expose a plebiscite conducted under the authority of the United Nations to the dangers which I believed certainly to exist. Indeed, I came to the conclusion that it would be impossible to give effect to the doctrines formulated by India in objections to my plan and at the same time frame a plan for partition and a limited plebiscite which I could ask Pakistan to accept."

Even though Sir Owen failed in this attempt at a limited plebiscite he pointed out:

"At all events, I have formed the opinion that if there is any chance of settling the dispute over Kashmir by agreement between India and Pakistan it now lies in partition and some means of allocating the Valley rather than in an overall plebiscite."

Giving reasons in support of his plan for partial plebiscite Sir Owen said:

"The State of Jammu and Kashmir is not really a unit geographically, demographically or economically. It is an agglomeration of territories brought under the political power of one Maharaja. That is the unity it possesses. If, as a result of an overall plebiscite, the State as an

entity passed to India, there would be large movements of Muslims and another refugee problem would arise for Pakistan who would be expected to receive them in very great numbers. If the result favoured Pakistan, a refugee problem, although not of such dimensions, would arise for India, because of the movement of Hindus and Sikhs. Almost all this would be avoided by partition. Great areas of the State are unequivocally Muslim. Other areas are predominantly Hindu. There is a further area which is Buddhist. No one doubts the sentiment of the great majority of the inhabitants of these areas. The interest of the people, the justice as well as the permanence of the settlement, and the imperative necessity of avoiding another refugee problem all point to the wisdom of adopting partition as the principle of settlement and of abandoning that of an overall plebiscite."

I have quoted extensively from Sir Owen Dixon's report because I think that he analysed the issue judiciously and took pains to find the best solution of the problem. His suggestions were the wisest and the soundest. The arguments that he used while recommending them are rational, persuasive and logical. Three years have passed when Sir Owen formulated his plan for a limited plebiscite and submitted it to the Governments of India and Pakistan. Nothing better has been suggested by any leader or statesman till this day to settle the dispute. It is my firm belief that if ever the two countries sincerely come forward to end the issue Sir Owen's plan will be the basis of the agreement. Unfortunately in August 1950 the plan was not acceptable to India and the Mediator had to return disappointed and disgusted with the job.

Sir Owen bitterly complained at several places in his report against the intransigence of India. He also gave his opinion about the incursion of tribesmen and the entry of Pakistan armed forces into the State territories. The Indian leaders as well as the Kashmir Nationalists have conveniently forgotten all other numerous observations of Sir Owen but remember this one and often quote it in their own words to prove that Pakistan is an aggressor. What he actually said is:

"Upon a number of occasions in the course of the period beginning with the reference on January 1, 1948, of the Kashmir dispute to the Security Council, India had advanced not only the contention to which I have already referred that Pakistan was an aggressor, but the further contention that this should be declared. The Prime Minister

of India, at an early stage of the meeting, made the same contention and he referred to it repeatedly during the conference.

I took up the position first that the Security Council had not made such a declaration; secondly that I had neither been commissioned to make nor had I made any judicial investigation of the issue; but thirdly that without going into the causes or reasons why it happened, which presumably formed part of the history of the subcontinent, I was prepared to adopt the view that when the frontier of the State of Jammu and Kashmir was crossed on, I believe, October 20, 1947, by hostile elements, it was contrary to international law and that when in May, 1948, as I believe, units of the regular Pakistan forces moved into the territory of the State, that too was inconsistent with international law."

By the time Sir Owen had concluded his unsuccessful mission in the subcontinent a new factor had entered in the international politics; it was the war in Korea which was fraught with grave dangers for the peace of the world. It was an open armed conflict between the two power blocs—the Communist and the Democratic, or in other words Soviet Russia and her satellites on one side and Britain and U.S.A. with their supporters on the other. The two rival groups had already emerged in the U.N. and this development was plaguing its conuncils and deliberations. Both the blocs are naturally keen to see that more and more countries are on their side in the tussle for power. All problems that come before the Security Council or any other body of the U. N. are viewed by the leaders of the two blocs from this angle and are seldom considered in the light of democratic or humanistic principles underlying the noble charter of the world organisation. It is generally believed that both India and Pakistan are on the side of Anglo-American bloc; everyone therefore supposed that power politics would not at least enter into the Security Council deliberations on the Kashmir issue. This belief was confirmed when Russia did not take any part in the discussions and remained neutral in the beginning. But the Korean War changed the situation. In South Asian politics the importance of India even in peace time is not negligible; it became considerable with the breaking out of hostilities in Korea. Nehru took the fullest advantage of the new critical situation. Kashmir thus

became a pawn in power politics. That was the reason why India displayed intransigence and refused to listen to reason when Sir Owen made repeated endeavours for the settlement of the dispute during the period of his stay in the sub-continent. "Pakistanis say Englishmen shake hands with us, wish us well and then look nervously round to see if an Indian is watching", rightly complained the Prime Minister of Pakistan at the British indifference at the Kashmir dispute. The policy of the Anglo-American bloc which has a dominant voice in the U.N. has been to adopt sweetly phrased resolutions on Kashmir to humour the Pakistanis and the State people on the one hand and to gratify India by delaying implementation of its own decisions on the other.

Since Sir Owen submitted his report the Security Council has leisurely been tinkering with the problem. After discussing the report in the usual manner by hearing the spokesmen of India and Pakistan the Security Council on March 30 1951 adopted a resolution appointing a new mediator who would "proceed to the subcontinent and after consultations with the Governments of India and Pakistan effect the demilitarization of the State of Jammu and Kashmir on the basis of the U.N.C.I.P, resolutions of August 13, 1948 and January 5, 1949". The Security Council authorised the new representative to take into account (a) the report of Sir Owen Dixon ; (b) the possibility that any forces required for the purpose of facilitating demilitarization in the holding of plebiscite might be provided from member states of the U.N. or raised locally; and (c) the possibility that, although the future accession of the State should be decided by the majority of votes cast in a State-wide plebiscite, this should not preclude, provided that due account is taken of geographical and economic considerations, subsequent boundary adjustments in areas contiguous to the frontiers of India or Pakistan in which the vote is overwhelmingly in favour of the Party with a minority of the votes in the State-wide plebiscite. The Security Council "called upon India and Pakistan in the event of their discussions with the U.N. Representative failing, in his opinion, to result in

full agreement, to accept arbitration upon all outstanding points of differences, such arbitration to be carried out by an arbitrator or a panel of arbitrators, to be appointed by the International Court of Justice in consultation with the parties". This last part of the resolution regarding arbitration was not acceptable to India and as we shall see the U.N. Representative did not have the courage to act up to it. Thanks to India's intransigence this command of the Security Council too has proved a dead letter.

Meanwhile, in the winter of 1950, a conference of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers was held in London. Liaquat Ali Khan, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, declined to attend it unless it agreed in advance to take up for discussion the Kashmir issue. The Commonwealth Prime Ministers struck what they regarded as via media and agreed to take up the matter not in the Conference but informally. In fairness to them, they certainly made sincere and earnest efforts to bring about an amicable settlement of the dispute. The main difficulty in the way of a settlement however was the preservation of law and order during the period of the plebiscite if Indian and Pakistani troops were withdrawn. The Prime Ministers of New Zealand and Canada offered to send the needed troops for the purpose from their own countries and also to meet the expenditure in this connection. But the Prime Minister of India did not agree on the plea that importation of foreign troops would be resented by his country men. Nor did Nehru agree to any of the other several proposals made at London to end the dispute. The Prime Minister of Ceylon revealed in a Press interview that Nehru would endlessly go on arguing without ever coming to the point at issue.

It is amusing that at the rejection by India of any plan for settlement of the dispute, Nehru, conveniently oblivious of the international agreements to which India was a party, complained that the United Nations had side-tracked the original issue of Pakistan's aggression by deciding to have a plebiscite in Kashmir.

The new U.N. Representative Dr. Frank P. Graham is an American diplomat who has distinguished himself by success-

fully mediating in the dispute between the Netherlands and the Nationalist leaders of Indonesia. He was to report to the Council within three months in case he was unsuccessful in mediation.

Dr. F. Graham devoted his energies to narrow down as far as he could the differences between India and Pakistan on the question of the demilitarization of the Kashmir State. But when he formulated his proposals and invited views of the two Governments he found that the differences on the quantum of forces to be left on either side of the cease-fire line persisted. His proposals were :

"THE GOVERNMENTS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN

1. Reaffirm their determination not to resort to force and to adhere to peaceful procedures and specifically pledge themselves that they will not commit aggression or make war, the one against the other, with regard to the question of Jammu and Kashmir;
2. Agree that each Government, on its part, will instruct its official spokesmen and will urge all its citizens, organisations, publications and radio stations not to make warlike statements or statements calculated to incite the people of either nation to make war against the other with regard to the question of Jammu and Kashmir;
3. Reaffirm their will to observe the cease-fire effective from January 1, 1949 and the Karachi Agreement of July 27, 1949;
4. Reaffirm their acceptance of the principle that the question of the accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India or Pakistan will be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nations ;
5. Agree that subject to the provisions of paragraph 11 below the demilitarization of the State of Jammu and Kashmir contemplated in the U.N.C.I.P. Resolutions of August 13, 1948 and January 5, 1949 shall be effected in a single, continuous process.
6. Agree that this process of demilitarization shall be completed during the period of ninety days, unless another period is decided upon by the representatives of the Indian and Pakistan Governments referred to in paragraph 9 below.
7. Agree that the demilitarization shall be carried out in such a way that at the end of the period referred to in paragraph 6 above the situation will be. :

(A) On the Pakistan side of the cease-fire line

(i) The tribesmen and Pakistan nationals not normally resident therein who had entered the State for the purpose of fighting will have been withdrawn;

(ii) The Pakistan troops will have been withdrawn from the State ;

and; large-scale disbandment and disarmament of the Azad Kashmir forces will have taken place.

(B) On the Indian side of the cease-fire line

(i) The bulk of the Indian forces in the State will have been withdrawn;

(ii) Further withdrawals or reductions, as the case may be, of the Indian and State armed forces remaining in the State after the completion of the operation referred to in B (i) above will have been carried out; so that at the end of the period referred to in paragraph 6 above there will remain on the present Pakistan side of the cease-fire line a force of .....* Civil Armed Forces, and on the Indian side of cease-fire line a force of.....*

* It is requested that the blank spaces be filled in by your Government.

8. Agree that the demilitarization shall be carried out in such a way as to involve no threat to the cease-fire agreement either during or after the period referred to in paragraph 6 above ;

9. Agree that representatives of the Indian and Pakistan Governments, assisted by their military advisers, will meet under the auspices of the United Nations to draw up a programme of demilitarization in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 5, 6, 7 and 8 above;

10. Agree that the Government of India shall cause the Plebiscite Administrator to be formally appointed to office not later than the final day of the demilitarization period referred to in paragraph 6 above;

11. Agree that the completion of the programme of demilitarization referred to in paragraph 9 above will be without prejudice to the functions and responsibilities of the United Nations Representative and the Plebiscite Administrator with regard to the final disposal of forces as set forth in Paragraph 4 (a) and (b) of the January 5, 1949 Resolution.

12. Agree that any differences regarding the programme of demilitarization contemplated in Paragraph 9 above will be referred to the Military Adviser of the United Nations Representative, and, if disagreement continues, to the United Nations Representative, whose decision shall be final."

In his first report to the Security Council which he submitted in September 1951, Dr. Graham listed four points of his original twelve-point proposal on demilitarization which were still in dispute. These were :

(1) demilitarization "in a single continuous process";
(2) in ninety days;
(3) leaving forces of agreed size behind the cease-fire line; and

(4) appointment of the Plebiscite Administrator by the end of ninety days.

He suggested two changes to his original proposals. They were (a) "demilitarization by July 15, 1952 unless otherwise agreed upon instead of in ninetydays" and the "lowest possibe number of forces being left behind the cease-fire line instead of a fixed number". Dr. Graham referred to various objections that had been raised by India and Pakistan to his plan. The Indian representative said that the report and the proposals were conceived in the "right spirit" and there were "germs of a settlement" in it yet the plan was not wholly acceptable to his Government. On the other hand Pakistan proposed that in Dr. Graham's formula the phrase "with due regard to the freedom of the plebiscite" be deleted in so far as it concerned Pakistan and the phrase "with due regard to the security of the State and freedom of the plebiscite" be deleted as far as India was concerned. That was where Dr. Graham handed the issue back to the Security Council.

Dr. Graham's recommendations to the Security Council were: First, the Security Council call upon the Governments of India and Pakistan to take immediately all measures to improve the relations between the two countries by avoiding any increase in their military potential in the State of Jammu and Kashmir and by instructing their official spokesmen and urging all their citizens, organisations, publications and radio stations not to make warlike statements calculated to incite people of either nation to make war against the other with regard to the question of Jammu and Kashmir : Secondly, the Security Council consider the possibility of a renewed effort being made to obtain agreement of the parties to the plan for effecting demilitarization of the State of Jammu and Kashmir : Thirdly, if the Security Council decides that a renewed effort to obtain agreement should be made, it might consider to instruct a U.N. representative to implement its decision by continuing negotiations with the Governments of India and Pakistan in order to obtain agreement of the two parties to the plan for effecting demilitarization of the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Security Council acceded to the request of Dr. Graham and instructed him to continue his labours to resolve the points of difference between the two parties. The U.N. Representative did not visit the subcontinent this time but invited the representatives of India and Pakistan to Geneva where discussions were subsequently held for a fortnight with no better results. For, when Dr. Graham reported to the Security Council again on 21st December, 1951 he had to admit failure to reach agreement on a plan for demilitarising Kashmir prior to holding of the plebiscite to decide the State's future. Recalling the points of difference between the two Governments on the original Graham proposals, the report said: "The conversations held by the U.N. Representative with the parties as well as the answers he has received to the different questions put to them by him, have convinced him that at this stage of the negotiations, the parties could not achieve agreement on the draft agreement as a whole, submitted to them by the U.N. Representative on September 7, 1951". Dr. Graham said that "the two countries had failed to reach an agreement on the demilitarization but he suggested that efforts should be continued.

Meanwhile a plan which had been submitted to the two Governments for demilitarization of the State by General Devers, Military Adviser to the U.N. Representative, was published. According to it, at the end of the demilitarization "there would remain on the present Pakistan side of the cease-fire line a force of four 'Azad Kashmir' regular infantry battalions of 900 men each, a force of 4,000 civil armed forces, 1,500 Northern and Gilgit scouts and 1,000 line of communication troops; and on the Indian side of the cease-fire line a force of seven infantry battalions of 900 men each, a force of 5,000 civilian armed forces (Militia) and 2,500 line of communication troops." This plan was promptly rejected by India.

The Security Council extended the term of Graham mission for another two months on 31st January 1952. The British suggestion that Dr. Graham should continue his efforts and report to the Security Council by the end of March was agreed upon.

A PAWN IN POWER POLITICS

It was puzzling for the people of Jammu and Kashmir to know that the representative of the U.S.S.R. remained silent and neutral when the dispute about the accession of the State came up before the Security Council in January 1948. For the fighters of freedom the problem was not so intricate as to force any supporter of the noble cause of liberty to seal his lips lest he be misunderstood. Ignorant of the debasing game of power politics the State people had hoped that of all the members of the Security Council, Communist Russia would be the foremost in championing their cause and that she would insist on the immediate holding of an impartial and free plebiscite under absolute neutral auspices in order that the enslaved four million human beings might get an opportunity to determine their own future. But the Russian representative remained mum. That was most disappointing and disheartening. Yet the State people did not believe that Russia was sitting on the fence to jump on either side as suited her own expansionist designs regardless of the wishes and the interests of the Kashmiris, as was alleged by those who know well the Soviet diplomacy. That conviction grew as a result of the recent bitter experience.

After maintaining complete silence for full four years Jacob Malik, Soviet Delegate, made a lengthy statement on January 17, 1952, in the Security Council meeting when Dr. Graham presented his third report on the dispute. Malik accused the United States and Britain of interference in the internal affairs of Kashmir people and outright violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter which provides for equality of rights of large and small nations. He said:

> "Article I of the Charter contains one of the important principles providing for the development of friendly relations among nations on the basis of respect for the principle of equality and self determination of peoples. Under the so-called regulation of the Kashmir question the plans of the United States and Britain grossly violate this important principle of the United Nations Charter. These plans deprive the Kashmir people of the right of self-determination. They attempt to substitute the right to self-determination with Anglo-American dictate. The Kashmir people are robbed of the possibility, independently and freely by way of a free expression of will, to decide their destiny and determine the future structure and status of Kashmir".

There is no doubt that the four million people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir passing their most miserable days on either side of the cease-fire line, are dissatisfied with the dilatory method in which the U.N. is attempting to solve the dispute. The procrastination has sickened the people who have almost lost faith in the effectiveness of the august world organisation to bring peace to this distracted part of the globe. Therefore the belated voice of the Communist Russia in support of Kashmir democracy would have been welcome to the victimised people. But in spite of these noble sentiments and seemingly righteous indignation of Jacob Malik what Russia wants is not the freedom of the people of Kashmir but their enslavement through the local fascists who are prepared to shift allegiance under the rapidly changing political conditions in the North. In order to explain what the Communist conception of self-determination for Kashmir is Jacob Malik said:

> "The United States and Britain are taking all measures in order to prevent a solution of the question as regards the status of Kashmir through a free and unhampered expression of the will on the part of the Kashmir people themselves. When in October 1950 it became known that the General Council of National Conference of Jammu and Kashmir adopted a resolution recommending the convocation in Kashmir of a Constituent Assembly for defining the future structure and status of Kashmir the United States and Britain immediately interfered in this matter in order to prevent the Kashmir people from independently deciding their fate and determining the status of their country. They hastened to impose upon the Security Council a resolution which declared that the convening of the Constituent Assembly and any attempt to take a step for determining the future structure and status of Kashmir or any part of it will not be considered as a decision of the future fate of Kashmir".

Evidently in these words Jacob Malik made the National Conference as the sole representative body of the State people and the resolution of its General Council as the voice of the four million inhabitants of Jammu and Kashmir. To any Kashmiri that sounds amazing and indeed it caused a surprise even among U.N. circles who are well-versed with the Soviet diplomacy. The United States or any other member of the Security Council never raised any objection to the convening of a genuine constituent assembly of the State people. As a

matter of fact if such an Assembly were convoked all peace-loving people of the world including the miserable Kashmiris themselves would be very happy. But it is travesty of truth to say that the hand-picked men brought together by the National Conference leaders are the real representatives of the people of the State. It was to the formation of such a fraudulent constituent assembly that the U. N. had rightly taken objection because all other political parties in the State representing the overwhelming majority of the people had expressed no confidence in it. It was astounding that Jacob Malik was supporting the right of such an undemocratic body to decide the fate and determine the future structure and status of the country of four million people of Jammu and Kashmir.

It is known all the world over that at present all civil liberties have been suppressed in Kashmir ; there is no freedom of expression or freedom of association for any kind of political activities other than those in support of the Nationalists in power ; the Nationalist Government is ruling by brute force, by terror and by gangsterism. More than three lakhs of Kashmiris are wandering in Pakistan and India as refugees. Hundreds of political leadres have either been externed or forced to flee from Kashmir and Jammu. Almost all human rights defined by the U.N. are denied to State people. Under such conditions how could a genuine constituent assembly be elected which deserved the support of any person claiming to be democratic-minded. When asked to explain a spokesman of the Russian delegation in Lake Success told Zaffarullah Khan, the Pakistan Foreign Minister, that Jacob Malik did not mean the Constituent Assembly convened by the Nationalists but an assembly elected by the State people in a democratic manner. It was pointed out that Malik had clearly laid down in his statement that :

> "In the opinion of the Soviet Government the Kashmir question can be successfully solved only by granting the Kashmir people the opportunity themselves, without outside interference, to decide the question of status of Kashmir. This can be achieved by the constituent assembly defining the status of Kashmir, an assembly elected by the Kashmir people in a democratic way".

In his reference to the resolution of the General Council too the Soviet representative had been ambiguous and did not definitely state that Russia supported the Constituent Assembly of the Nationalists. But this ambiguity proved short-lived. The more the Nationalist leaders came under the influence of the Reds and sought the opportunistic support of the Soviet bloc the more obliging the Russian publicity organs grew towards them.

On May 10, 1952 Moscow Radio, reiterating the charge against the United Nations Security Council of inaction over the Kashmir problem, said :

> "The Kashmir people have expressed their will to freedom and self determination in the founding of the Kashmir and Jammu National Congress (Conference) whose main objective is to secure peace and the development of their country".

So Russia had decided to support the Nationalists because the top-ranking leaders of the National Conference, opportunistic as ever, were flirting with communism. Russia was playing power politics no less than the Anglo-Amercians and the pawn was Kashmir.

Dr. Graham again proceeded to India to discuss the points of difference with the two Governments. Now he talked in concrete terms about the quantum of forces that were to be left on either side of the cease-fire line at the end of the demilitarization. Though he did not meet with complete success it came to light when he reported to the Security Council on May 3, 1952 that India wanted to keep 21,000 regular Indian forces plus 6000 State militiamen on their side but would allow Pakistan to have only a force of 4,000 men "consisting of persons normally residents of Azad Kashmir territory half of whom should be followers of Azad Kashmir and the other half of persons who are not followers of Azad Kashmir". On the other hand Pakistan insisted that at the end of the period of demilitarisation there should remain on each side of the cease-fire line "the lowest possible number of armed forces based in proportion to the number of armed forces existing on each side of the cease-fire line on January 1, 1949",

On November 6, 1953 the Security Council adopted one

more resolution on Kashmir in which it urged the two contending Governments to accept Graham's proposal for demilitarization of Kashmir on the following lines:

"(1) At the end of demilitarization there would be left on the Indian side of the line from 12,000 to 18,000 armed forces.

(2) On the Pakistan side of the line there would be 3,000 to 6,000 armed forces."

The Council urged the Governments of India and Pakistan to enter into immediate negotiations at the headquarters of the United Nations in order to reach an agreement. Soon after the adoption of this resolution Nehru declared in a public speech in Trivandrum on December 28, 1952, that India did not accept the Anglo-American resolution and that "we are not going to act under its compulsion." While expressing his views on the resolution in the Security Council meeting Zafarullah Khan, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, had suggested that Pakistan agreed to India stationing 28,000 troops provided Azad Kashmir forces were kept intact. To this Nehru replied that the suggestion was far worse than most of the suggestions that he had to consider.

As per instructions of the Security Council Dr. Graham made his fifth attempt to resolve the differences between the two Governments when their representatives met him at Geneva in March 1953. Reporting the result of his endeavour on March 31, he said that while during the negotiations there has been further clarification by the two Governments of the question of the number and character of the forces to remain on each side of the cease-fire line at the end of the demilitarization "a substantial difference in position still remains". The report added that after thorough consideration of communications and further conversation with the representatives of India and Pakistan, "the U.N. Representative felt that there was no ground left at this stage on which to continue the conference and, therefore, in agreement with the two representatives he decided to conclude it." Outlining the value of an agreement on Kashmir, Dr. Graham said:

"The people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir have waited over four

years for the fulfilment of the promise of a plebiscite under the two agreed U.N.C.I.P. resolutions. The people in the East and the West look for an example from the top of the subcontinent in Jammu and Kashmir that an agreement for a plebiscite will soon be fulfilled for the people of this most ancient, beautiful and historic State. Renewed physical and spiritual energies would be released by an agreed settlement of this dispute. The meaning of this new freedom would shine across the earth from the topmost roof of the world, brightening the lives of the people in the hills and valleys, fields and forests, the homes and schools, the mosques and temples, the shops and work places, beckoning near and far to all people struggling to be free".

The tardiness with which the U.N. representatives have functioned and the leisurely manner in which the Security Council has adopted decisions over Kashmir issue have been subject of the bitterest criticism of the people in the subcontinent. Kashmiris have felt sickened at heart and lost faith in the efficacy of the international organisation. Nearly six years have passed when the issue came before the Security Council but the final settlement is nowhere in sight and the Council does not seem to be prepared to take any firm measures which it has the authority to take under the provisions of the U.N. Charter, to end the dispute. There is no doubt that power politics has emasculated the Security Council and it is afraid of implementing its own decisions.

Nevertheless in any appraisal of the work it would be unfair and unrealistic not to recognise the achievements of the U.N. mediators. It was through their valuable intercession that the shooting war was stopped and cease-fire effected. It is through the constant vigilance of the U.N. military observers all along the cease-fire line that there is no recrudescence of warfare and peace has been maintained since January 1949. It was through the judicious analysis of the imbroglio by Sir Owen Dixon that the solution of a limited plebiscite was first mooted and has since held the field. It was through the perseverence and steadfastness of Dr. Frank Graham that the differences between India and Pakistan were narrowed down to the minimum. Because the final settlement is still to come critics should not forget that today the issue does not present the same formidable obstacles to a solution as it did in 1948.

A PAWN IN POWER POLITICS

Efforts are afoot at present to get all the outstanding issues between India and Pakistan settled peacefully by the method of direct negotiations. Two meetings between the Prime Ministers of the two countries were held in London and Karachi to achieve this noble end. A third meeting took place in the month of August in New Delhi in which an agreement was reached over the Kashmir issue. I shall have to discuss the outcome of this successful meeting and subsequent developments at its proper place. This much may be said here that if there appears to be any prospect of a final settlement of the Kashmir dispute through these negotiations it is because several U.N. representatives have cleared the ground by their tremendous labour during the past five years. Power politics has deterred the U.N. from adopting any strong measure to bring the intransigent party to book but it has not on any occasion stood on the side of tyranny, despotism or injustice. Besides, it has focussed world attention on the problem. That much goes to its credit and augurs well for the future of humanity.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

FREEDOM OR FASCISM

THE Kashmir Nationalists and their patrons, the Congress leaders, claim that since 27th October 1947 the State is completely free and is taking long strides towards progress and prosperity. In one of his speeches in the Indian Parliament delivered on the 12th February 1952, Jawaharlal Nehru posed a question, "what is the present position in Kashmir ?" and then without waiting for an answer himself observed : "The part of it which is under the Kashmir Government today is making remarkable progress economically, socially and politically". Nehru did not adduce any facts and figures to prove his statement. Perhaps he did not need any as the Parliament was packed with Congressmen who had surrendered their judgment to their leader, at any rate so far as Kashmir affairs were concerned. So what Nehru said was swallowed without any question. But let us find out what truth there is in this statement of the Prime Minister.

In order to understand the "remarkable progress" that Kashmir has made under the Nationalist regime it would be fair to every one to know how, prior to October, 1947, the people fared in the State so far as the civil liberties are concerned ; what sort of legislature was functioning in the country and how far the people's representatives were associated with the administration.

Before we proceed to answer these questions it is well to caution the reader that there is no intention whatsoever to prove that the previous regimes under the Dogra Maharaja were in any way ideal or popular. They were undoubtedly despotic, irresponsible and unrepresentative. For that reason the people were struggling to get freedom. What is intended by comparing those regimes with the Nationalist rule is to show the

hollowness of the claim that there has been any advancement or progress during the past six years.

Freedom of Press was achieved by the State people as a first fruit of the gigantic movement of 1931 when by an amendment the State Press Laws were brought in conformity with those then in force in British India. Newspapers appeared from Jammu and Srinagar almost immediately after promulgation of these regulations. In the succeeding years many journals, some of them of a fairly high standard, took birth. In 1947 before the Nationalists came to power there were no less than forty-eight newspapers and periodicals published from Srinagar, Jammu and other big towns. There was no ban on the propagation of any views and the papers belonged to all shades of political opinion. There were standard dailies, weeklies, and monthlies among them devoted to political, social and religious reform. They were mostly published in Urdu but there were a few which used to be in English as well as in Hindi. Now this is a thing of the past. More than half of these journals, including all critical, bold and independent ones, have been stopped by the high handed methods of pre-censorship or forced to suspend publication by underhand means. Not a single paper is allowed to see the light of the day which does not support the views of the Nationalists on the important issues of vital interest to the people. All papers published in English and Hindi have disappeared. Official advertisements and other benefits are granted to only the supporters of the regime. It is no wonder that the journalistic standard has deteriorated and the existing papers are mostly mere rags.

In 1951 the Nationalist Government found it expedient to amend the Press and Publication Act of 1932 to further muzzle and weaken the already moribund Press in the State. The strange and unheard of amendment fixed the number of issues for all categories of newspapers. The daily, bi-weekly, weekly and fortnightly journals were to publish no less than 24, 8, 4, and 2, issues respectively every month. If for any reason whatsoever any journal failed to come out with the specific number of

issues during any month it would have been deemed to have ceased publication under the provisions of this law. When the legislation was under consideration the State journalists vigorously protested against its adoption and called it a Black Bill. But the legislation was enacted in the teeth of opposition. Such a law is unknown in any part of the subcontinent. For imposing less stringent restrictions on the State Press during the previous regimes the National Conference leaders used to cry that the Dogra Raj was despotically gagging the voice of the people and suppressing public opinion. With this outrageous Act on the statute book the Nationalist Government stopped publication of many papers which did not support the official policies or the misdeeds of the Nationalist leaders and their upstart kinsmen.

In the beginning of 1953 several papers including *The Daily Martand*, *Sawera*, and *Naya Kashmir*, were peremptorily ordered to stop and *The Chand* was asked to get all material for publication in its columns censored by the District Magistrate. What was their fault? Nobody can tell, because the "popular" Government never cares to make public the reasons for its arbitrary actions. One could only surmise. A near relative of Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed had some genuine or imaginary complaint against one of his Pandit neighbour. He called the Pandit to his house and beat him. The Pandit sent a report of the incident to *Martand* claiming to be the mouthpiece of the Pandit community. The *Martand* published the report. Though such unlawful deeds by the Nationalist leaders and their relatives are by no means rare in present day Kashmir the publication of the report was unusual. This temerity proved the undoing of *The Martand*. The *Sawera* and *Naya Kashmir*, though staunch and old followers of the national cult, had grown into the habit of criticising the Nationalist leaders. These had therefore become obnoxious.

The Chand, one of the loyal admirers of the Nationalists, had been advocating compromise between Praja Parishad and the Nationalist Government. It had been voicing the feelings of the Dogras regarding the policy pursued by the Nationalists.

This was unpalatable to the authorities. Therefore pre-censorship ban was imposed upon the journal.

The Jamhoor of Srinagar resenting these orders of the authorities wrote an editorial under the title "Press Law or Strangulation". Hardly had the ink with which the editorial was written dried than the Government issued an order imposing pre-censorship ban on *Jamhoor* as well. This is the freedom of Press that the people enjoy under the "popular" rule.

The National Conference is maintaining its own official organ, *The Daily Khidmat*. It is getting all the Government patronage. It is no secret that the Daily has received big subsides from the secret funds at the disposal of the Police Minister. All officials, government contractors, *panchayats* and ration depot holders, have been instructed to subscribe for the paper; yet it cannot stand on its legs and its publication had to be stopped for months in 1952.

If this is the condition of the Press in Kashmir the freedom of association fares no better. On the eve of the fateful 26th October 1947 there were, besides the National Conference, no less than sixteen political parties espousing different ideologies in the State. Among them at least half a dozen enjoyed a good deal of popularity in different communities and classes of people. This has been admitted by Nehru himself who, however, claims that the National Conference was and is the most popular and representative organisation. But no one can deny the existence of the other parties in the year 1947. Indeed two of them, the Kisan Mazdoor Conference and the Muslim Conference, were as much known as the National Conference in the Valley. As if by some magic *mantram* all the other parties appear to have gone to sleep since Nationalists came to power. Where have they gone ? No correspondent of the Congress Press cares to tell us. But the truth is that they have been suppressed and the meetings of the leaders and workers of these parties are underground "somewhere in Kashmir" because no party which does not support the National Conference is allowed to function normally. If any individual or group of indivi-

duals, not in the good books of the Nationalists, attempt to hold a meeting they find themselves only a few hours after the event lodged behind the prison bars. No one hears anything about them further. The State Press dare not publish such news and the Indian Press considers it unpatriotic to publish anything that is calculated to defame the Nationalist regime. Why the Praja Parishad got a tremendous publicity in India is a different matter and will be discussed in another chapter.

Political parties, associations and groups in the State are numerous. On the accession issue they are divided into three categories. First, there are those, like the Muslim Conference, who advocate Kashmir's unconditional accession to Pakistan on the sole basis that the majority of the State's population is Muslim. In the second category may be included those like the Kisan Mazdoor Conference and the Socialist Party who see no difference in Kashmir going either way but demand that the issue should be settled democratically by an impartial and fair plebiscite. They are highly critical of the Nationalist Government for creating impediments and obstacles in the path of an early settlement. Lastly there are those like the Praja Parishad who are staunch supporters of the view that the State should merge with India whether Kashmiris want it or not and that the internal administration of the State should be supervised by the Central Government at New Delhi. The Nationalist Government has totally and ruthlessly suppressed all those who come under the first two categories. These parties, being mostly composed of Muslims, have no one in India to uphold their cause; their voice is never heard in the Indian Press. The reports of the activities of these parties are nowhere published in the widely circulated journals in India. Not even factual news about them such as the arrests of their leaders and workers is published. The Kashmir Nationalists had adopted a similar policy of suppression towards the parties of the third category in the beginning but it jeopardised their position. For, these parties are backed by influential Hindus in India and even by Congress men. They are also supported by powerful sections of the Indian Press. The Nationalist rulers have therefore of necessity become

conciliatory towards these parties with the result that, in Jammu, the Praja Parishad has come to the top.

Since October 1947 more than ten thousand people belonging to different parties have been consigned to prison in the Valley alone. Members of all opposition parties, espousing any ideology, have lost freedom in this manner. Even workers of the National Conference have not been spared at times when they, having profited by experience, decided to take an independent line in the interest of their country. While during the previous regimes political workers were sent to prison only during the period of anti-Government agitation and for years the jails used to remain empty of any politicals, there has never been a day under the Nationalist rule when hundreds of people have not remained in detention for their views. Some of the detenus have been behind the bars for more than three years, a period which no Nationalist leader has ever passed in jail at a stretch. For the first time in the history of Kashmir educated women came out to fight for freedom and were sent to prison in the most shabby manner. Most of the people were arrested without warrants and thrown into jails, at times hundreds of miles away from their homes, in uncongenial climate. Consequently many of the workers became invalids. Thousands of political workers and leaders have been either externed from the State or forced to flee to India or Pakistan during the past six years.

The Kashmir Government does not ban any political party; it simply makes it impossible for the party and its members and workers to function by resort to disgraceful methods of rowdyism and inhuman torture. Beating of political opponents, trampling upon their bodies till they vomit blood, applying hot iron to their bare skins, blackening of their faces with dung and mud, and such other barbarous ways are not unknown in State jails under Nationalist administration.

Som Nath Tikku, M.A., Editor of *The Weekly New Kashmir* was dragged by legs and on his bare back by Nationalist volunteers for a mile on the famous highway, the Residency Road, when it was full of snow during winter 1948 because he ventured to criticise the arbitrary methods of the Nationalist leaders.

Badly bruised and humiliated, Tikku quietly left his motherland to serve journalism elsewhere. It is just as it was in Germany after the National Socialists came to power in 1933 under Hitler. Prominent Nationalist leaders privately admit that it is so and take pride in having perfected their machine for repression as completely as Nazis had done to crush the opponents of the regime. The main slogan of the Nationalists raised in every party gathering and published in their official organ is "one party, one programme and one leader". It is repeatedly stressed in the meetings addressed by the Nationalist leaders that no other political party can be allowed to exist in the State. To enforce this totalitarian and fascist policy the following organisations have been created :

(a) Officially

(i) National Militia of 6,000 men equipped with modern arms and ammunition.
(ii) Police force which has been doubled since October 1947 and now comprises of 4000 men.
(iii) A special staff of Police under a notorious sadist G.Q. Gandarbali maintained solely to suppress the critics.
(iv) A batch of 500 detectives directly under Police Minister and paid out of secret funds.

(b) Non-Officially

(i) Peace Brigade of about three thousand men.
(ii) Nearly 5000 paid volunteers called storm troopers.

This huge force is not maintained to protect peaceful people. It is meant only to keep a close watch over the activities of the fighters for freedom and patriots. It is engaged to break the meetings of the opposition parties by rowdyism and to beat political opponents and critics of the Nationalist leaders. "During the last four years the biggest increase in expenditure has been in the Police Department", wrote the pro-Nationalist *Martand* editorially in its issue of December 2, 1952, "because it was thought necessary that the life and property, honour and self respect, peace and security of the citizens should be fully guaranteed. For this reason you will find today that there are so many Inspectors,

sub-Inspectors and other big officers of Police as were perhaps never in existence in the history of Kashmir. If you see ten men walking on the road then you can be sure at least five of them are directly or indirectly connected with the Police Department. But in spite of this the activities of thieves and criminals are extending day to day and the law and order is becoming loose". Enumerating the hardships of the people due to the carelessness and indifference of the guardians of law and order *Khidmat* stated in its issue of October 20, 1952 that "if law is defied and Police are unable to apprehend the criminals all expenditure on the Police Department is merely wasted". When innumerable cases of theft and burglary were reported early in 1953 from all parts of Srinagar *Martand* made an amusing proposal in its issue of January 16, 1953 that the Authority should issue a "curfew order" for nights making it difficult for the law-breakers to roam about under cover of darkness.

The law and order is in charge of Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed, a man most dear, of all the Kashmiris, to the Indian imperialists. His ideals are those of a Prussian war lord. He loves to be called Herr Himmler because he believes that he can firmly deal with any situation that faces him. He is notorious for using his *lathi* freely. He takes pride in doing so. Once he publicly flogged some citizens on mere hearsay reports without giving his victims any hearing. "I do not know whether this is lawful or unlawful. That part of the work I leave to Kilam (a Nationalist leader now Judge of High Court)", declared Bakhshi publicly in a meeting in reply to certain protests. "Whatever I think to be for the good of the State or suitable for the emergency, that I decree. I have absolute faith in my *danda* which I use unsparingly".

In winter 1948 four political detenus escaped from the Srinagar Central Jail. Bakhshi flogged all the warders and head-warders on duty, one so seriously that he almost lost consciousness and had to be admitted into hospital. Not satisfied with this he imprisoned the entire staff of nearly two hundred men including the Superintendent of the Jail and posted convicted criminals and Militiamen in their place for three days. Recently

an admirer enquired of Bakhshi what his fate would be if the State acceded to Pakistan. "Better than it is at present", replied the Nationalist leader. "No administration can run successfully without hooliganism and only those adept in the art can prove able administrators. I will be in great demand because Pakistan knows my worth". Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed is sure that this new *kultur* alone will lead Kashmir to the goal of freedom.

The sacred human right of inviolability of the private correspondence is more honoured in breach than in observance so far as the fighters for freedom are concerned. Abdullah revealed in the State Legislature on 15th November 1952 that even the private correspondence of commercial nature was being censored and the Government did not intend to stop the practice. There are reasons to believe that the local officials of the Postal Department (which is directly under the Government of India) are in conspiracy with the State authorities. Hardly any letter to the address of any political worker, not in the good books of the Nationalists, or his relatives and friends reaches the addressee intact. Hundreds of packets and even registered covers have been lost in transit. Despite strong protests the postal authorities continue the game and the Nationalists find it thus easier to tease and torture all patriots, respectable citizens and, of course, the fighters for freedom.

The Information and Broadcasting Department of Kashmir Government has opened more than three hundred social centres all over the Valley where radio sets have been installed for the benefit of local people. It was hoped that the listeners would hear only the broadcasts of the Kashmir Radio. They were warned neither to switch on to the Radio Pakistan nor to the Azad Kashmir Radio. But forbidden waters are always sweet and despite close watch it was found that almost all centres were flouting the orders and taking pleasure in sinning. Therefore all the sets were immediately withdrawn, radio engineers consulted and the needles indicating stations were so fixed that nothing but the broadcasts of the Radio Kashmir could be heard at these centres. Knowledge under fascist regime means no

more than what the rulers want the people to know ; all else is taboo.

Big claims made by the Kashmir Nationalists, emphatic statements issued by the Congress leaders and the identical reports of all correspondents of the Congress Press try to impress upon the world that the four million people of Kashmir are with one voice for State's accession to India. "So long as even one Kashmiri is alive he will not allow his motherland to go to Pakistan". This statement has been repeated countless times by Abdullah, Bakhshi and other prominent Nationalist leaders. In his speech in the Indian Parliament referred to earlier Nehru asserted : "I would like a plebiscite to be held as early as possible all over the State. I have not a shadow of doubt what the decision will be". Now if there is any truth in this statement there should be no difficulty about getting the Kashmir problem solved in weeks if not days. The cold war between India and Pakistan need not be prolonged for years. Because if India is quite sure of her success, as these statements suggest, it is in her interests and for the prosperity of the Kashmir people that the prevailing conditions of uncertainty and insecurity in the State should be brought to an end. The Nationalist rulers of the State will also then feel sure to carry on unperturbed the administration of the country. With undivided attention and steadfast mind they will be able to devote all their energies towards the all-round advancement of their motherland. But the history of the negotiations for the settlement of the dispute does not prove that Nehru is so anxious for an early settlement. Those who are sure of their success in a contest do not raise irrelevant issues ; they do not create imaginary difficulties. If the people of Kashmir support the Nationalists to the last man as they claim, why do they need Indian armies to remain in Kashmir during the plebiscite period ?

The Kashmir Nationalist leaders know they are disliked by the people and can remain in the saddle only so long as the Indian armies are there to support them. For that reason they demand that the armies should in no case and on no account be withdrawn. Indeed the Nationalist leaders are always on

the lookout that India and Pakistan do not come nearer and become friends. By all possible means at their command they have been making efforts to get the two countries embroiled in a war so that more Indian armies are sent to Kashmir. Such a consummation would bring great satisfaction and mental relief to them. During past years whenever the Nationalist leaders suspected that the people of India were feeling frustrated or exasperated over the unsettled Kashmir issue and were reluctant to make huge expenditure on the armies stationed in the State they travelled in India to persuade the people not to compromise but to continue helping the unpopular, despotic administration in the State by allowing the armies to remain where they are. "It is not the business of anybody in the world, however great he may be," thundered Afzal Beg, Revenue Minister of Kashmir, in Madras on January 12, 1953, "to ask Kashmir to drive out the Indian troops. They must stay there. They came there at our request to save us. They are there and they shall be there to protect our country." In the same strain and with equal emphasis did Ghulam Mohammed Sadiq, President of the Kashmir Constituent Assembly, observe in a Press Conference in Bombay on February 13, 1952 : "There is a belief among the people of India that India was unnecessarily spending crores of rupees on the maintenance of troops in the State, Nothing can be more fallacious than such a belief. If India withdraws her troops from Kashmir they cannot be demobilised,. They have to be maintained and it does not matter whether they are in India or in Kashmir." Speaking the next day at Bombay's Chowpathy Sands in a public meeting Abdullah remarked : "India is fighting in Kashmir on a principle which is dear to her and no monetary considerations should weigh with her in such a case."

One may ask why are these leaders so anxious to see that Indian armies are maintained even if the people of India want early settlement and dislike any further waste of their national wealth. In 1934 and 1938 there were no armies to support the Nationalists to win the elections. Indeed then all the Dogra armies and the official machinery were arrayed against them.

Yet they came out with flying colours in the contest. If they did not need outside armies then to fight elections why do they need them now during the days of plebiscite? The answer is obvious. People in Kashmir detest the Nationalist regime and its leaders; therefore the Government cannot exist even for a day after the Indian armies are withdrawn from the State. For that reason the question of withdrawal of Indian armies becomes the question of life and death for the Nationalists.

It is significant that whenever Nehru has tried in the past, however feebly, to come to terms with Pakistan about the Kashmir issue or for that matter over any dispute, the Kashmir Nationalists have felt upset and opposed him. They have gone to the limit of agreeing with the Jan Sangh leaders on such occasions though they have all along declared their uncompromising hostility towards communalism, particularly Hindu communalism. "I agree with Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee that steps should be taken to free the soil of Kashmir from the occupation of Pakistan", declared Mohammed Sayid, General Secretary of the National Conference, in the Indian Parliament on August 11, 1951. "When the Indian Government says that an attack on Kashmir will be considered as attack on India occupation of a part of Kashmir should be considered as occupation of a part of India." The implications of this statement are obvious. The Kashmir Nationalist leader was advocating war with Pakistan which the Indian Government under the leadership of Nehru was unwilling to start.

It is usually argued that the Indian armies are in Kashmir to protect the country against any aggressive designs from Pakistan. The Kashmir dispute is now before the Security Council and will remain so until the accession issue is finally decided. The armies are to be withdrawn after a truce agreement is signed by both India and Pakistan. Having signed that document the rulers of Pakistan must surely be mad men to entertain any such aggressive designs. If with the U.N. Representative making preparations for a plebiscite in Kashmir Pakistan attempts to occupy the country by force of arms she will become an outcaste and will have no place in the comity

of nations. Indeed then, and not till then, she will be declared an aggressor by the whole world.

Whatever may be the justification for the Indian armies to remain in Kashmir there can be no doubt that they are, like Pakistan forces (both being non-Kashmiri), outside armies. "I wish to make it clear", declared Nehru in a public speech in Jammu, "that the Indian Army will remain on the soil of Jammu and Kashmir so long as the people of the State require it for their defence." Nobody can object to the stationing of foreign troops in a country if the local people want them; but the question is who, in the opinion of Nehru, is entitled to speak on behalf of the State. If it is the National Conference —and Nehru will probably recognise none else—it has already spoken. The Nationalists need the Indian armies against the people and will need them for ever to remain in power. But if the real voice of the people counts for anything it has been expressed by other political organisations in Kashmir and Nehru knows it. On October 31, 1951, in a historic joint meeting of the Working Committees of the Jammu and Kashmir Kisan Mazdoor Conference and the Kashmir Socialist Party, a comprehensive resolution was adopted about the political developments in the State, the concluding portion of which said:

> "This joint meeting of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference and the Kashmir Socialist Party, representing the suppressed urge of the four million people of the State, reiterate that there can be no settlement of the Kashmir dispute uuless and until the foreign armies are totally withdrawn from all parts of the State, a neutral or an all-parties Government is set up in place of the present unpopular regime and all political and human rights of the people are fully restored. Until these prerequisites are fulfilled no decisions taken by any body however exalted a name might be given to it, will be binding upon the people of Kashmir".

The resolution was published in India and also in the Foreign Press. Could any thing be more clear and unequivocal ?

We need not make mention of similar views of other parties, most of whom function on the soil of Azad Kashmir.

Perhaps it will be said they are Pakistan-inspired. Great significance, however, attaches to the above views as it is not on the other side of the cease-fire line that they have been expressed. It was in Kashmir proper, where the despotic Nationalists are in power, that the meeting was held and the resolution adopted, though by the very nature of the circumstances obtaining in the Valley the members had to take a great risk in expressing this view. Needless to say some of the participants in the deliberations were subsequently arrested and thrown into prison. If, however, Nehru is true to his word, this should have been enough for him to order withdrawal of the Indian armies.

Of all people in India the Congress leaders and Nehru in particular should know how galling and painful it is for any self-respecting man to find his country occupied by outside troops.

The Prime Minister of the Indian Republic does not recognise that any other political party than the Kashmir National Conference represents the people of the State. To him Nationalist leaders alone are the fighters for freedom of Kashmir and the National Conference is the most popular organisation of the people. All other political organisations belong to reactionaries and enemies of the country. "When the people of Kashmir struggled for freedom against autocracy during these last twenty years", asked Nehru in a statement which he made in the Indian Parliament on February 12, 1951, "where were they who today shout loudly from across the border about the freedom of Kashmir? Most of them were allied to the forces of reaction or were silent. They still remain the representatives of reaction, even though they talk a different language and invoke the name of religion to confuse the issue". There are more than one fallacies involved in this statement. First, it is not correct that the opponents of the Nationalist Government are to be found only across the border and only among those who invoke the name of religion to confuse the issue. As must have already become manifest to the readers of these pages critics of the Nationalist ideology and the doings of the National Conference leaders are to be found

on this side too. Perhaps those on the other side are not now so bitter and emphatic and numerous as on this side because the wearer knows where the shoe pinches. I imagine it will be no news to Nehru and other Congress leaders that in the State or at any rate in the Kashmir Valley, it is no longer those who "invoke the name of religion to confuse the issue" who oppose the present regime and give expression to the woes of the people. Among the fighters for freedom at present, the standard-bearers of secularism and democracy are in the forefront. As I shall presently show, the Congress leaders are, by insisting to have Kashmir by hook or by crook against the will of the people, forcing the State Muslims to become religious fanatics as a reaction to the high handedness of the Government of India. As regards the claim that the Nationalists have always been the fighters for freedom and all the reactionaries are on the other side I would advise Nehru to know better through some more reliable source than appears to have been available to him so far. One would ask of Nehru if such stalwart, redoubtable and indefatigable patriots as Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, Ghulam Abbas, Abdus Salam Yatu, Allah Rakha Sagar, Noor Mohammed, Shyam Lal Yechha, Mir Abdul Aziz, Mohammed Sikandar Malik, Kanhya Lal Koul, Abdul Ahad Mir, Pitambar Nath Fani, Jagan Nath Sathu, Amin Haider, Agha Shaukat Ali, Mohammed Usuf Qureshi, Mohammed Yusuf Saraf, Mohammed Akram Lone and many hundred others who are now arrayed against the National Conference, are reactionaries ? If so what is Nehru's criterion of progress and what are the qualifications of a fighter for freedom ? He should know that these brave men have gone many times to jail during the last twenty years for opposing Dogra autocracy and some of them have been behind the bars for longer periods than even the tallest among the Nationalist leaders can boast of. Many of them have been in prison along with the Nationalist leaders in 1931, 1934 and 1938. And tragically enough, when the Nationalist clique came to power they also put them in prison in a more cruel manner than the Dogras were accustomed to do.

While on the one hand there are such heroes among the opponents of the present "popular" Government, there is no dearth of men in the Nationalist ranks whose record is stained and shameful so far as the Kashmir Freedom Movement is concerned. For instance, Colonel Peer Mohammed Khan, formerly Education Minister of Abdullah's Government and now a member of the Indian Council of State, is a well-known reactionary who supported the Dogra Monarchy till 1947. What about Pandit Shiv Narain Fotedar, now nominated as a member of the House of People? He was the arch communalist and great prop of the Hindu Autocracy whose whole life has been spent in running down the Freedom Movement and in abusing the Progressive leaders. And who are Girdharilal Dogra, Finance Minister of Kashmir, and Rai Bahadur Anant Ram, Member Council of State? Have they ever gone to jail or even raised their fingers against Dogra despotism in the past? The former opposed Quit Kashmir movement of the Nationalists and the latter has spent all his life in the service of Dogra Autocracy as its officer and minister suppressing the Freedom Movement of the Kashmiris. One can go on adding to these instances, but probably this will suffice.

The truth of the matter is that if past record and history are to be any guide there are fighters for freedon and reactionaries on either side at present though by the very nature of things in the State the former are to be found more among the Muslims and the latter more among the Hindus. Therefore the fighters for liberation are in a large majority in the ranks of the opposition while the National Conference is stuffed with reactionaries and old enemies of democracy and freedom.

Nehru should also know that the Nationalists' past record is not quite clean so far as Dogra Monarchy and communalism are concerned. In nineteen thirties when some far-sighted political workers now in opposition to the Nationalists were discussing with Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi, through

correspondence, how healthier politics could be introduced to end the autocracy and create a democratic society in the State, the Nationalists were wallowing in the mire of communalism and sending telegrams to the Maharaja congratulating the Dogra autocrat on such functions as his birthday or the birthday of the Yuvraj. As we know that slavish desire to flatter the alien despot did not abate a bit in the Nationalists till they came to power. People in Kashmir have not forgotten how the Nationalists vied with other reactionary political parties in giving a royal reception to the Maharaja on his return from the tour of Middle East in autumn 1944. On that occasion the Nationalists were involved in street brawls in Srinagar to prove that they were more loyal than the king.

We know that in 1949 the Constituent Assembly of India adopted a Constitution for the country. The Jammu and Kashmir State was included as an integral part of India according to it. The Nationalist leaders demanded that Kashmir should be treated as a special case and given the fullest autonomy so that the State people particularly the Muslims may feel assured that the Hindu-dominated centre is not going to interfere in their domestic affairs. The Indian Constituent Assembly generously accepted the demand and the Article 370 was incorporated in the Constitution according to which the powers of Indian Parliament to make laws for Jammu and Kashmir State were limited to "(a) those matters in the Union list and the Concurrent list which, in consultation with the Government of the State, are declared by the President to correspond to matters specified in the Instrument of Accession governing the accession of the State and (b) such other matters in the said list as with the concurrence of the Government of the State, the President may by order specify". It was a most welcome provision in the Constitution. Had the State people voluntarily joind India there is no doubt this should have proved a great boon and an effective safeguard for the preservation of their autonomy. But since the people have not acceded to India by their free will and as they want to overthrow the present

imposed regime, this autonomy has been of the greatest assistance to the Nationalist rulers in suppressing the public opinion. Paradoxically, even many of those who are against State's accession to India have had to complain against this grant of autonomy which has been instrumental in strengthening the fascist set-up in the country.

No group of men wielding political power and holding the destiny of millions of people in their hands are so fortunately placed as the Kashmir Nationalist leaders. Had the people been left to themselves with no interference from outside there can be no doubt that the Nationalist Government would have been overthrown long ago and many of the Nationalist leaders brought to book for their misdeeds. But the Indian Army in occupation of the State has rendered that natural remedy for a tyrannised people out of reach. There might be two opinions about the justifiability of the military occupation but there ought to be no difference among reasonable and sane people that having stationed forces in the State to support the local Government the Indian Nation should be keen to see that justice is done and if there is difference between the Kashmir Government and any section of the State people the former does not act arbitrarily. It is the primary duty of India to see that no individual, however humble, or any section, group or party of the people however tiny, is coerced into submission. That much of moral responsibility devolves on the shoulders of India. She can avoid it at the peril of adverse verdict of the future historian.

The Nationalist leaders believe that while India should bear the entire colossal expenditure for the maintenance of the armies which defend the unpopular and fascist Government against the onslaughts of Kashmir democracy, the Indian people or their representatives in the Parliament should have no voice whatsoever in the internal administration of the State. "Neither the Indian Parliament nor any other Parliament outside the State has any jurisdiction over the State", declared Abdullah emphatically in Srinagar on March 29, 1952. The Nationalists might maltreat the State people, de-

prive them of every human and political right, confiscate their personal properties without rhyme or reason, torture their political opponents by savage and barbarous methods, but India must remain unmoved and passively look on; she has no responsibility to set matters right or even ask the Nationalist Government why they are resorting to such hooligan methods and lawless ways. The great privilege the Nationalists have magnanimously granted to poor India is to despatch armies and more armies to Kashmir at fabulous cost to the tax payer to enable the Nationalist Government and its adherents to do as they like with impunity. A more deplorable political set-up than this is unimaginable.

It was said of the Viceroy of India in the pre-independence days that his position was like that of the Mughal autocrat and the traditions of British democracy did not affect his position. But was the white ruler so irresponsible as the Kashmir Nationalist ? Even before there was any elected Legislature in India to watch the doings of this white Mughal he had to be responsible for his deeds to the Parliament in Londan. Governors-General and Viceroys were indicted, censured and discharged when found guilty of any dereliction of duty. Even during the days of East India Company when the British Government had directly no say in the matter Warren Hastings, the very first Governor-General of India, was impeached by the British Parliament and reduced to penury during the course of the hearings. The British Nation could not shirk or escape its responsibilities and sully its fair name. The administrations of certain colonies of Western Powers in Asia are still conducted despotically but without exception the administrators in these colonies are responsible to the Parliaments of their ruling countries if not to the people of the colonies themselves. Kashmir Nationalists are neither responsible to the State people as has been amply proved in the course of this survey nor to the Indian Parliament as has been firmly stated by the Nationalist leader. And this is not to be the condition during the transition period or for some short duration to be counted in months or years as some people are led to think.

The Kashmir Nationalists are determined to make this position permanent in their own interests. "The Jammu and Kashmir State will be an autonomous republic within the Indian Union", observed Afzal Beg, President of the Basic Principles Committee, on March 24, 1912, giving an idea of the future. "So far as the Constitution of the State is concerned we aim at making its framework such that the State will be an autonomous unit within the Indian Union. The unit will be a republic like other republics. According to our plans the state will have its own president, a separate national assembly and a judicial set-up". With such autonomy under the protection of foreign armies the future of the people of Kashmir is very dark indeed.

Fascism and brutality of the Nationalists are, under the circumstances, bound to become a permanent feature of the public life in the State from which there can be no deliverance. For, so long as there is no amicable settlement between India and Pakistan over the accession dispute conditions in the State will continue to be disturbed and abnormal, the necessity for stationing the Indian armies will remain, Indian Parliament will have no right to interfere, even the Supreme Court will have no jurisdiction and the Kashmir Nationalists will rule the country according to their sweet will. Any one with the least sense of justice in him cannot brook this intolerable position for a moment.

Addressing a public meeting in Delhi on March 26, 1953, Nehru observed in reference to Korea: "It is a tragic irony of the present world that those who come to liberate people forget all about those people on whose land they fight and in the process of "liberation" the people suffer terribly. It is a strange sort of liberation!" Very aptly could these observations be made about Kashmir as well.

Not that the public leaders in India do not know anything about this deplorable situation in the State. The average Indian may be ignorant of these developments because he has been deliberately fed on one-sided reports eulogising the Nationalists as the very personification of all that is high and

noble in human culture. But many of the political leaders and newspapermen are fully posted with the latest turns in the State politics. It would indeed be a poor estimation of their intelligence to say that they know nothing beyond what they say publicly or write in the columns of the papers. They are fully aware of the fact that the Nationalist Government stands because of the presence of Indian bayonets; they know perfectly well that all sections of the people in Kashmir, whether pro-India or pro-Pakistan, have become sick of the corrupt and totalitarian regime and want to change it at the first opportunity they can find to do so. Many of them including some M.Ps who have toured the State during the past few years have noted and collected the facts and figures for themselves. Privately such Indian leaders and publicists have been freely talking to their acquaintances outside about the extremely deplorable conditions in the State. But so far not even one of them has had the moral courage either inside the Parliament or outside to discuss the matter and tell the people what the truth is especially when it pertains to State Muslims and the masses.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

ON BRINK OF RUIN

THE State of Jammu and Kashmir is situated at a place on the globe where the borders of half a dozen countries meet. From immemorial times the State people had established trade relations with all their neighbours and were deriving great benefit from these. Routes connecting trade centres of the State with those of the bordering countries had been opened. Before any roads for wheeled traffic were constructed canals and rivers were also used for carrying merchandise from one place to another. It was natural that the people of Kashmir should have greater business intercourse with the country which is connected with the State through these waterways. The main big rivers of Jammu and Kashmir are Sind, Vitasta (Jhelum), Chenab and Ravi. The source of these rivers is the big mountain ranges of Himalayas lying to the North and East of Kashmir and all of them flow into the West Punjab.

Kashmir did not have any modern highways till about three-quarters of a century ago. It was only as late as 1890 A.C. that the Jhelum Valley Road linking Srinagar with Kohala, the border town of the Punjab province of the, then British Indian territories, was constructed. Subsequently other highways including Banihal Road were built which gave a fillip to commerce and industry in the State. At the time of Independence of the subcontinent and on the eve of the Kashmir War there were three highways linking the State with the outside world. They were, first, Jhelum Valley Road from Srinagar to Kohala via Baramulla and Domel; second, Banihal Road from Srinagar to Sialkot via Banihal and Jammu; and third, Abbotabad Road, from Domel to Abbotabad via Ramkot. There was also a rail link from Jammu to Sialkot forming part of the pre-partition N. W. Railway. Besides these highways there were several bridle paths and footpaths connecting different parts of

the State with neighbouring countries but such of them as could be maintained in good condition were used in case of emergency or only by local people living on either side of the border.

It will be seen that like the big rivers all the highways connected the Jammu and Kashmir State with that part of the Punjab which now forms part of Pakistan. It was therefore quite natural that almost all export and import business of the country should be carried on with or through the trade centres of that province, particularly Rawalpindi and Lahore. To do so was easier, cheaper and mutually beneficial. The timber weighing millions of tons grown in the far-flung forests of Jammu and Kashmir was carried by the rivers down to important rail junctions such as Jhelum in the Punjab, almost free of any charge. Fruits and other products were speedily taken from the orchards of the Valley to Rawalpindi and disposed off within twenty four hours. The State people as well as outsiders could enter Kashmir or leave it by any one of the three roads they liked though usually one preferred to travel by the Jhelum Valley Road because it was more comfortable and less risky.

Of all the sea ports in India Karachi, now capital of Pakistan, is nearest to Kashmir. It is cheaper to get foreign goods into the State through this port.

The trade and other business conducted through the three highways and the four waterways was enormous. It amounted to crores of rupees every year and all classes of people living inany region of the State benefited by it because the highways and the waterways were not confined to any province; they were spread over all the important areas of the State.

In August 1947 came Independence of India and the accompanying disturbances and holocausts. Then followed the undeclared War of Kashmir in October that year which shattered the entire economic structure of the State that had been laboriously built through centuries. The West Punjab being a part of Pakistan, which was declared an enemy country by the Nationalists in power, all these highways and waterways

became entirely useless for the State people for all purposes. The roads still exist in fine condition but traffic on them across the border has come to a standstill; the rivers are flowing as they did for thousands of years in the past but not a log of wood is carried by them from this side of the cease-fire line into the Punjab; the rail link between Jammu and Sialkot via Suchetgarh has been dismantled.

To make good the loss sustained by the State and its people by this abrupt dislocation of export and import trade the Government of India constructed a new highway at a huge cost of three crores of rupees linking Jammu with Pathankot in East Punjab. It is a marvellous feat of road engineering highly creditable to the Public Works Department of the Government of India. The road is an extension of the Srinagar-Banihal-Jammu Road. Thus instead of the four waterways, three highways and one railway linking the State with the outside world we have now one road and it is supposed that this meets the demand of the people. As a matter of fact the Nationalist leaders have stated in their speeches and statements more than once that the business carried on through the Srinagar-Pathankot road is larger in volume than used to be conducted through all the abandoned highways, waterways and railway put together.

In Kashmir today due to the absence of reliable facts and figures it is very difficult to compare the present with the past. The Maharaja's previous governments used to publish statistics about all important matters in their annual administration reports. Many heads of departments also were, as a matter of rule, giving comprehensive data about their working in their periodical reports. These are now things of the past. As I shall presently show the self-glorifying declarations of the Nationalist leaders that the State has been making tremendous progress since they came to power and that the economy of the country has been restored are irresponsible and undependable. Therefore it is not easy to know to what extent the Srinagar-Pathankot Road has been able to make good the damage that has been done to the country by the sudden closure

of her nature-given waterways, expensively-built highways and the wisely designed small and single railway. Yet it is also not very difficult to see the irreparable loss that the State people have suffered by the new arrangement and will continue to suffer until the closed waterways and highways and the railway are re-opened and traffic on them re-started under normal and peaceful conditions.

It is obvious that the service rendered by the mighty rivers of the State in carrying timber and other merchandise from different parts of the State to the railhead can never be rendered by the Pathankot Road. Kashmir forests being solely owned by the Government, export of timber is a hig source of revenue to the State. It used to form one of the main items of income in the Budget. But timber is no monopoly of Kashmir; other States having big forests in them grow timber in abundance. Kashmir timber was mostly purchased and used by the N. W. Railway before partition. Some of it was also bought by the people of the Punjab for building purposes. When under conditions of strained relations with Pakistan, the rivers could carry no more timber to outside stations the Forest Department began to collapse and the very future of the State became doubtful. It was an effective weapon in the hands of pro-Pakistan elements for propaganda against the State's accession to India. More with the intention of disproving the argument of the opposition than with the purpose of restoring the balance of the State Budget the Nationalists began to despatch timber through their newly-built official transport service at a prohibitive cost. The enthusiastic traders of East Punjab in co-operation with the Congress administration also helped the Kashmir Nationalists for some time to find a market. But, despite best all-round efforts, the trade could not be revived to its pre-partition level. And then with the passage of time the zeal displayed by Indian traders during 1948-49 cooled down; the laws of business, ignored for some time to win Kashmir, asserted themselves and the great expectations of the Nationalists did not materialise. The Nationalist Government then resorted to an objectionable method of subsidizing the timber business. The

fares of travel on Pathankot-Srinagar Road were arbitrarily raised to meet a part of the heavy charges of freight on timber. The timber is carried on nominal charges and the travellers are forced to pay for this reduction in freight. Today by this device some timber continues to be despatched by State transport lorries but it is through sheer robbery and extortion of money from travellers on the Pathankot-Srinagar Road that this is done. Besides, the business has received a heavy blow from which it cannot easily recover.

Other exportable products of Kashmir have suffered likewise by the closure of the highways. Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir and the central place of the Valley, is 255 miles distant from Pathankot, now the nearest railhead. Ordinarily it takes forty-eight hours for a goods lorry to reach Pathankot from this city. There are towns in Northern Kashmir which are more than 300 miles distant from the nearest town in India and big orchards of fruit trees lie in that part of the Valley. Before 1947 almost the whole exportable fruit crop was sent to Rawalpindi which is only 150 miles away, the distance that can be covered in a motor lorry in about 12 hours. It is worthy of note that during summer saving of a few hours matters a lot to the preservation of delicate fruits. Moreover, the higher freight charges for longer distance cannot be overlooked; they impede the growth of the industry. Owing to high freight Kashmiris have to pay higher prices for all imports too; sugar, salt, soap, kerosene oil and what not is dearer in the State particularly in the Valley and its northern parts than they would have been if the J. V. Road had not been closed to traffic.

And yet this is not all. The only link connecting Kashmir with the outside world at present—the Srinagar-Pathankot road—does not remain open throughout the twelve months of the year. For four to five months during winter, after the first heavy snowfall, the Banihal pass is blocked. Except for occasional visits of aircraft all intercourse with the outside world is suspended and the whole Kashmir population is marooned. Those Kashmiris who happen to be outside are

forced to loiter in India till the road is reopened sometime by the middle of April. Occasionally for days even the mail does not come to or leave the Valley. The misery of a people thus isolated can be imagined."The people of Kashmir find themselves cut off from the world for many months during the winter" confessed Abdullah in a large gathering of peasants in Ganderbal on 3rd July 1953. "The Government feels compelled to dump huge stocks of essential supplies at considerable expense to meet the requirements of the winter months and yet prices rise making living in the Valley very expensive". Before 1947 if Banihal Road was blocked by snow traffic was diverted to other routes which generally remained open throughout the year. Business was never suspended nor were people stranded inside or outside the Valley.

Every year since 1947 with the approach of winter the Nationalist leaders have been assuring the people that arrangements have been made to keep the road open but never have such assurances proved of any use. Not that the Nationalist Government has not done all it could do to fight the forces of Nature to clear the road of snow and frost; it has exhausted all technical devices in co-operation with the Indian Military but so far without any success. Recently it has been given out that the Government is consulting expert foreign engineers to bore a four-mile long tunnel through the mountain near Banihal village at a cost of more than four crores of rupees which will keep the road open to all traffic throughout the year. It remains to be seen whether this is only a propaganda stunt in connection with the impending plebiscite or there is any truth in the report. In any case the success of the plan depends on several factors, some of which are beyond the control of the Nationalists.

The little scope for business with the outside world through the Pathankot route has been further restricted for adventurous people by regulation of the newly established transport service of the Nationalist Government. The Government has opened emporia at various cities in India where products of cottage industries in the State are kept for sale.

Before 1947 traders of Kashmir, both Hindu and Muslim, used to go about the length and breadth of India to sell their wares. In order that the State emporia may not have to compete with independent traders whose goods are, generally speaking, of better quality and cheaper prices, restrictions have been placed on non-official export of goods from the State. By this device free trade is throttled. The emporia are the preserves of the relatives, supporters and friends of the Nationalist leaders. Men with no business qualifications or experience have been employed in the emporia on high salaries. Most of the jobs are sinecure. Naturally owing to the high overhead charges the prices at which goods are sold at the emporia are prohibitive. That has necessitated the Nationalists to impose restrictions on the business of the independent tradesmen and to lower the wages and privileges of the artisans in the State. It is claimed by the Nationalist leaders that they have been able to sell the Kashmir goods to the tune of several lakhs of rupees annually through the emporia, but it is not stated that when compared with the business transacted prior to 1947 by the traders of Kashmir it is only a fraction. The Government emporia today exist in different parts of India due to support on political grounds. Rich and politically conscious Indians believe that by helping these emporia to exist they are strengthening the Nationalist cause in Kashmir. But, if and when, this support is withdrawn as it will be in due course of time, the emporia shall have to be closed. In the meantime the Nationalists will have irreparably damaged the cottage industry business.

Had the Government organised the traders and the artisans on co-operative lines without arbitrarily interfering in the business and guided the middle men and the labour on sound principles of self-help and democracy they would have opened a bright future for the trade. But as conducted at present the industry is going headlong towards destruction.

A great part of income of Kashmir people and the State Government is derived from influx of visitors. Experts in the tourist trade are of the opinion that by proper publicity and by

affording reasonable amenities and facilities to the visitors, at the modest estimation more than a lakh of people would like to visit the Valley every year. Before 1947 nearly forty thousand outsiders came annually. It gave an impetus to the local business and brought substantial revenue into the State coffers. A well-to-do class of people, the houseboat workers called *Manjis*, lived entirely on the visitors; they did not have any other source of income. But since the Nationalists were installed in power tourist business has flagged.

Every year at the beginning of the season the Nationalist Government assures the Kashmiris that the coming year will bring business beyond expectation and more visitors than had ever come to Kashmir will be pouring into the Valley but at every close of the season it is known to have been worse than the last. One unfortunate communal incident somewhere in the subcontinent, some controversy between India and Pakistan or an unstatesmanlike speech by some leader, mars the bright prospects. No one in Kashmir now believes that the tourist trade can be set right so long as the accession problem is hanging fire.

In Kashmir during winter owing to the rigours of inclement weather people cannot work hard and earn. Every one, be he a trader, a shopkeeper, an artisan, a middleman, a hotel-keeper, a *manji* or a labourer, hopefully expects to earn money in the months of summer. All fervently hope—or used to hope—that with the advent of "season" visitors in large numbers would pour into the Valley and they would be able to earn and make good the loss sustained by them during the months of involuntary inactivity. But now all seasons seem equal. Year after year since 1947 people have patiently waited for good times to return but so far they have been repeatedly disappointed. They have gradually exhausted their meagre savings, sold their poor belongings, mortgaged their ancestral properties and incurred huge debts. Many have been ruined and many more have become paupers. Never before in living memory did so many beggars throng the streets of Srinagar, other towns and practically all big villages in the country. The Nationalist

daily *Khidmat* has suggested half a dozen times that a law should be enacted "to stop the growing nuisance of beggary in Srinagar". The condition of the *manji* class and those shopkeepers who depend solely on the visitors has become desperate It is reported on good authority that a large number of house boats in Srinagar and its suburbs are now devoted to immoral purposes; the boats have become virtual brothels where poverty-stricken and famished, handsome, young daughters of Mother Kashmir are selling their bodies, their honour and their modesty to the Indian militarymen and others. Venereal diseases were unknown in the Valley till 1947. But now let anybody come and see for himself ; it is most painful to narrate.

If the condition of the working classes is such that of the under-paid officials is no better. Before the Nationalists were installed in power petty officials were given all kinds of promises. It was said that to ameliorate the condition of meagrely-paid Government servants was one of the first items in the programme of the Nationalist Government. Soon after Abdullah became head of the administration he made an encouraging declaration that under the new dispensation no Government employee would get less than Rs. 100 per month. Yet it is a fact that the petty officials are still getting almost the same salaries as they did before 1947. A peon, a forest guard, a jail warder or a *patwari* in State service, is paid no more than Rs. 35 a month, a teacher gets as little as Rs. 40 and same is the condition of most of the Government servants today.

Perhaps this state of affairs might have been endurable if the pre-1947 price index of the necessities of life could have been maintained, if not lowered, by the Nationalists in power. In this they have failed. Since the formation of the Nationalist Government prices of all essential commodities have risen. When Abdullah was reminded by his own colleagues of his promise he observed in his speech in the Legislature on May 19, 1952:

> "It has been proposed that temporary allowance should be granted to petty officials. They are already drawing one temporary allowance and due to it the State exchequer is overburdened with twelve lakhs of

> rupees. Where can we get more money ? I have been reminded of my promise to fix the minimum pay of Rs. one hundred. Until and unless the economic conditions of the country improve it is not possible to redeem that pledge."

In 1946 the Nationalists made the high price of rice as the main plank of their agitation against the Kak Government. The rice was never sold at more than Rs. 20 a maund during those days. Under the present regime the price of this staple food of Kashmiris went up to Rs. 60 a maund and it was never sold at less than Rs. 30 a maund till the middle of 1953. People died of starvation in many parts of the State. A report published by a delegation of Jammu journalists in June 1950 after inquiries revealed that there had been over 150 deaths in Kishtwar alone from starvation and expressed the fear that a large number of people had fallen prey to diseases by eating wild herbs. The report further stated that "about 85% of the cattle have died from rinderpest and in many cases people are eating flesh of these dead cattle". India has been despatching grains and salt and cloth to Kashmir in abundance. But it is well-known within the State that most of it finds way direct into the black market through the agents of the Nationalist leaders before it is sold to the people. In a statement in the Legislature Nationalist Kushok Bakula revealed on May 12, 1952 that "cloth and kerosene oil sent from Srinagar by the Government was sold in the black market in Ladakh ; a bottle of the oil could be had for no less than Rs. 10." It is not the Buddhist leader alone who has complained thus. From all parts of the State even supporters of the Nationalist Government have been repeating the same tale.

Owing to the accession dispute and its consequences the State has lost many of the main sources of its revenue. In the hope that normal times will return soon and with the idea of strengthening the Nationalists, the Government of India liberally advanced big loans to the Kashmir Government. It was stated in the Indian Parliament by C.D. Deshmukh, Finance Minister, on April 29, 1953 that the Government of India had given loans to the tune of 14.66 crores to the Kashmir Govern-

ment till March 31, 1953. A large slice of this money was squandered by the upstart leaders in useless works of show and by distributing it among their followers, friends and relatives in many ways. Presumably getting reports about this spend-thrift policy of the Nationalists the Central Government gradually became less generous in course of time with the result that the Nationalists had to fall back on their own resources and ingenuity to create income. What they did is quite in accord with their policy of extortion. They have been virtually plundering every one they have to deal with.

We have already shown how goods are sold through the Government emporia in different cities in India on prohibitive prices and how the Kashmir traders who could have competed with these emporia have been deprived, through imposition of undue restrictions, of conducting their business in a normal manner. Similar is the case with the transport in the State. The Kashmir Government has its own Transport Department which runs buses on the Srinagar-Pathankot Road and also in different parts of the country. Having known some of the undesirable dealings of the private bus owners the establishment of a government transport service would any day be most welcome, but here again the Nationalists have, by imposing severe and undue restrictions, killed competition. By hook or by crook many private transport companies have been forced to stop business with the result that the Government Transport Department can charge anything for their service. "If today only petrol is derationed", declared Ajodhya Nath, Secretary Chamber of Commerce, Jammu, on May 5, 1952, "and the private bus owners get petrol in sufficient quantity as does the State Transport Department then the same goods for which the Government has fixed Rs. 5 per maund as freight from Srinagar to Jammu would be carried at Rs 3 per maund. Recently when the Government carried the goods at Rs. 6 per maund some private bus owners offered to carry the same at Rs. 3 and did carry at this rate".

It is not only through emporia and transport service that the Nationalist Government has been resorting to the nefarious

practice of black-marketing and profiteering. There is hardly any sphere of life where it has not been doing the same. In the matter of controlled commodities the Government extracted as much profit out of the poor people as possible. "In only one seer of sugar the Government is appropriating a profit of five annas", protested *Martand* on November 18, 1952. "If any shopkeeper would have acted like this no one knows what steps people themselves would have taken against him or what the Government themselves would have done to him after declaring him a profiteer and black marketeer. But now the Government are doing it themselves and that too under the provisions of Control law. So the people are helpless and silent. But there is a limit to even silence and helplessness. When it oversteps those limits then disappointment is the result and there is no alternative for a man but to mistrust the Government, attempt night and day to end such a regime as speedily as possible and liberate himself from such a rule".

Soon after India became independent and the native States were integrated with the adjoining provinces or constituted into separate unions and units as parts of India, the internal customs was abolished throughout the country. But the Kashmir Nationalists have so far refused to wind up Customs Department in the State. Indeed since 1947 custom duties on many goods coming from outside have been raised to make up for the loss of revenue. Nothing can enter the territories of Jammu and Kashmir without payment of the duty. Kashmiris have to purchase all outside goods at a raised cost. Nowhere in the subcontinent does the internal customs exist now. It has been abolished even in Azad Kashmir. But the Nationalists are adamant that it should continue in Kashmir. "The time has come when the Kashmir Government should abolish the customs cordon", demanded the president of Chamber of Commerce, Jammu. He told a Press conference on April 3, 1952 that "continuance of the pactice of charging internal customs duties on the goods entering from India has pushed up the cost of living within the State. Customs duties in some cases are as high as 200% of the price of the article".

Besides the customs duties the Nationalist Government have levied new taxes or enhanced the old ones. Education in the Government institutions, including the colleges, was almost free till 1947. It was left to the 'democratic' and 'popular' government of the Nationalists to levy big fees on students for the first time under the Dogra Rule. The students protested and made demonstrations against this new taxation but were beaten by the police into submission.

When even such steps failed to balance the budget, the Nationalists resorted to still more objectionable methods. In autumn 1950 there were unusual rains in the Valley and floods came which damaged some property and standing crops. For the Nationalists it was a god-sent blessing. They lost no time to declare that the calamity was unknown in the annals of Kashmir. A Flood Sufferers Relief Fund was started and money began to be collected inside and outside the State, both officially and unofficially. Anyone interested to learn the atrocious methods by which the workers of the National Conference extorted money from the people is invited to read the harrowing reports in the local Press particularly in the issues of *Martand* of those days. Hundreds of people were beaten if they refused to pay as much as was demanded. Victims included reputed traders and distinguished lawyers and teachers.

Officially the Government ordered every State employee to contribute one twelfth of his salary for six months to the Fund ; the prices of all the rationed commodities were ordered to be raised by 12½% for the same period and the amount thus collected was to be deposited in the Fund. At the expiry of the period the Nationalists found that through this method they had been able to collect a very huge amount ; so the period was extended twice. The State people became so much exasperated that even the *Khidmat*, official organ of the National Conference, had to admit editorially that such things could not happen even under the previous autocratic regime of the Dogras. The collections were stopped only after the levy had been extorted for more than eighteen months.

The Kashmir Government have never revealed the correct figures of the amount collected in the Flood Sufferers Relief Fund or the amount distributed among the sufferers. It is however estimated unofficially that the Government had been able to secure more than a crore of rupees while the amount spent on the victims of the flood has not been more than one lakh. No accounts have been published till this day.

In 1948, 1949, 1950 and 1951 the Nationalist Government framed budgets with deficits amounting to 3.7, 2.8, 2.9 and 2.5 crores of rupees respectively. But having robbed the people and plundered the country in the above mentioned ways it has been able to balance the budget and the deficit in 1952 did not amount to more than 7.11 lakhs of rupees.

Having shown how the Kashmir Government is deriving its revenues it would be of interest to know how the income is being spent. It would have been a source of some satisfaction if a substantial part of this revenue were spent on the welfare of the State people. But that is not being done. The Nationalists are anxious to make hay while the sun is shining. In every way they want to benefit their followers, retainers, adherents, relatives and friends. Hundreds of new posts have been created with absolutely no work for those who hold them. Administration has been made top heavy as it was never before. Prior to 1947 there used to be only four Ministers for the whole State of Jammu and Kashmir. The first Nationalist Cabinet consisted of eight Ministers. Subsequently three of them, Sardar Budh Singh, G.M. Sadiq and Col. Pir Mohammed, were dropped. But still there are five Ministers and four Deputy Ministers for only that part of the State which is on this side of the cease-fire line. Previously there were only six Secretaries to the Maharaja's Government for the whole State; now there are more than a dozen Secretaries to the Nationalist Government. The budget for the administration has increased enormously and scores of new posts of officials have been created simply to find employment for the supporters of the National Conference or the relatives and friends of the Nationalist leaders.

Since the Nationalists came to power many schools, dis-

pensaries and veterinary hospitals established during the old regime have been closed down. The Health Minister disclosed before the Legislative Assembly on April 9, 1953, that since Nationalists came to power thirty-six hospitals had been closed and only 13 new ones started. "There is no satisfactory arrangement for medical aid in the countryside", complained *Khidmat* on September 26, 1952. "For thirty or even forty miles no dispensary is to be seen. It is disheartening that at places both allopathic as well as Unani and Ayurvedic dispensaries have been closed down." When asked to explain why this was done Shamlal Saraf, Health Minister, gave the following amusing reply in the State Legislature:

> "The present Government does not believe in the principle of establishing dispensaries in name. It is true that the previous governments had opened such dispensaries without doctors and without buildings. But the present Government is not prepared to establish such dispensaries because we do not want to deceive the people."

A similar question was asked by another Nationalist member of the Legislature about the veterinary hospitals which had been closed down by the Nationalist Government. Replying to it the Revenue Minister said on May 14, 1953:

> "When we began to implement our programme of starting new veterinary hospitals we saw that at most of the places the established hospitals were only in name. There were no trained doctors or compounders in them. So as a matter of policy we considered it useless to keep such hospitals in existence."

This from the Government which has been reponsible for hounding out reputable and distinguished physicians like Dr. Gwash Lal Koul, and Dr O.N. Thusso and surgeons like Dr G.L. Vaishnavi and many others of lesser fame. Surely these are queer and evasive arguments to explain away the utter failure of the Nationalists to implement any programme of social welfare for the people. It only shows how, instead of making any progress since 1947 conditions in Kashmir have deteriorated. From the speeches of the Nationalist Ministers one would have thought that the few hospitals and dispensaries still in existence are the model ones. Krishen Dev Sethi, a Nationalist leader, told the Government in the Legislature on May 8, 1952,

that "out of 23 lakhs of rupees reserved for Medical Department only one lakh is spent on medicines. Consequently *Aqua pura* is being given to patients in the hospitals in place of medicines." To this the Minister had no reply to vouchsafe.

Many schools have been closed down in the countryside and the students are not receiving proper attention and care since the Nationalists came to power. Discussing facts and figures of the educational progress in the State *Khidmat* wrote on March 24, 1953 that "the standard of education has immensely fallen. This is a cause of perturbation for those interested in the future progress of the country."

The Kashmir Nationalists have been excessively and unduly praised for introducing land reforms and for scaling down of rural indebtedness. Interested journalists have published news stories and articles about it in such a way that it has become very difficult if not altogether impossible to critically and dispassionately examine the whole issue. Uniformed leftists in India take it for granted that what the Nationalists have done is for the walfare and betterment of the peasantry and those who oppose or even criticise the policy of the Nationalists in this behalf are none but reactionaries and an'i-democrats. But the fact is as we shall presently show that the legislation introduced by the Nationalists regarding the proprietorship of land or scaling down of debts, has added to the prevailing confusion in the economic life of the country. But before we discuss the agrarian policy of the Nationalist Government and the steps taken by them to implement it we think certain broad principles about State economy should be briefly explained to make the discussion more comprehensible and fruitful.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir is at present like the rest of the subcontinent of India an agricultural country. The large majority of the State people, more than 85% of the total population, subsists, in one way or the other, on land. The prosperity of the country therefore lies in the well-being of the tillers of the soil. If they remain backward, poverty-stricken, ignorant and suppressed, the State as a whole can

show no sign of advancement however prosperous the other classes and sections of the people might be. There is no doubt that the peasants in the State are still living in medieval times as serfs. The major portion of the produce of the agricultural land was being taken away by the absentee proprietor of land leaving very little for the actual tiller of the soil to live on. The result had been that the standard of life of these agricultural labourers who form the majority of the community had always remained at a low level. The only remedy to rectify this state of affairs is that the proprietorship of land should be changed; it should be taken away from the *jagirdars* and absentee landlords; the tiller of the soil should be made the master of the land he cultivates. There is no other remedy for this disease. No freedom movement in Kashmir can be worth its name if it does not include this item in its economic programme; no popular or democratic government can be successful unless soon after assuming charge of office it takes steps to implement such a land reform.

Though not as important as the land problem the staggering rural indebtedness is by no means ignorable. Poor, illiterate and simple-minded working classes in the State have been literally enslaved by money lenders; a small amount once lent to any working man has often made him a debtor for ever. He is forced to go on paying in the shape of interest for years and decades. Not infrequently a debt incurred by father is inherited by the son. Freedom has no meaning for such a worker if he is not liberated from the clutches of the shylock.

Naturally therefore to all fighters for freedom these two problems have always been in the forefront of their mind. As early as 1940 at the time of the second plenary session of the National Conference both these questions were raised by the radical members who were still in the party then. The Conference adopted two resolutions introduced by Prem Nath Bazaz one declaring that land belonged to the tiller of the soil and the second assuring the indebted workers that immediately after the formation of the first democratic government in the State steps would be taken to liquidate rural indebted-

ness. It should however be clear to the meanest understanding that these drastic changes could only form part of a comprehensive economic programme. If carried out in isolation while leaving other sectors of State economy untouched they would unbalance the social equilibrium and ultimately harm the peasantry itself. No democratic party which is called to assume office with the vote of the people and which has the good of the working classes at heart can be foolish to take such a step.

The Nationalists came to power in 1947 not with the support of the State people but because under instructions of the Indian Government the Dogra Maharaja put them in the saddle. Conscious of this weakness the Nationalists have been acting in a most irresponsible fashion with the ulterior motive of bringing people to their side and to catch votes in the impending plebiscite. The changes in the laws of the proprietorship of land or the regulation to scale down rural indebtedness have not therefore been effected with the intention of benefiting the pauperised and enslaved working classes but with the political purpose of playing to the gallery. This has vitiated the scheme at the very base.

Stated in brief the provisions of the Big Landed Estates Abolition Act are: No one in the State is allowed to possess more than 182 *kanals* of agricultural land; land in excess of this area owned by any individual has been taken away from him and handed over to the tillers of the soil; orchards and farms, without any consideration of area, have been left in possession of their owners; land belonging to the religious shrines of different communities remains untouched. The Constituent Assembly of the Nationalists has decided that no compensation is to be paid to the landlords from whom the land has been taken away. This is considered to be the boldest revolutionary step of the Kashmir Government. According to the latest official information nearly 2,00,000 acres of land have come under the direct ownership of tillers in the whole State till the end of April, 1953.

Obviously it is a travesty of truth to state, as the Nationa-

list Government and its supporters are in the habit of asserting that landlordism in the State has been abolished. To begin with these reforms have not been introduced in Ladakh as was admitted by the Government in a statement in the Legislature. There are thousands of people in Kashmir who own 182 *kanals* of land but do not till it themselves. It is well known that hundreds of big landlords on getting the information that surplus land was to be taken away from them distributed it among their relatives and friends each getting a piece of 182 *kanals*. And the land belonging to the religious places is not inconsiderable. Add to it the area under orchards and farms.

It is a groundless claim that the peasantry as a whole has been freed in Kashmir. Those working on the land still possessed by landlords continue to be serfs as before. It is queer justice that the Nationalists have done. If there is heart burning among those who are still wage labourers as before and have lost zest in their work there is nothing surprising in it. Perhaps in spite of this internal contradiction in the scheme one would have admired the reforms for having at least freed a vast number of the tillers—6,00,000 according to the official figures—to whom the surplus land has been transferred but there are other economic considerations which have to be carefully noted before such an appreciation can be expressed.

In Kashmir peasants have always been sharing the produce of the land with the landlords. Generally a tiller used to get one half of all that grew on the land he tilled. The landlord had to pay the revenue and spend money on the improvement of the land out of his one-half share. Having become the proprietor of the land the responsibilities of the landlord have been transferred to the peasant's shoulders. A peasant-proprietor would readily and willingly discharge these. But under the gangsterism of the Nationalists he is unable to do so. For the 'freedom' that he has attained he is made to pay in manifold ways.

To begin with the peasants did not get the land so easily

nor so cheaply as it is supposed. Speaking in the Constituent Assembly on March 29, 1952 a prominent Nationalist member Rampiara Saraf, complained that "since the land reforms in the State were being implemented by a bureaucratic officialdom tillers have to pay bribes which in no case are less than the actual compensation". Another leading member of the National Conference, Mir Qasim, then Chief Parliamentary Secretary, asserted before the official Wazir Committee on March, 24, 1953 that "Jammu and Kashmir land reforms had been badly implemented". He also revealed that "landlords had distributed land among their relatives before the reforms were legally introduced".

The Nationalist Government has, like other provincial Governments in India, plans for procurement of food grains. These are being carried out through the Nationalist volunteers all over the countryside. It is a heart rending tale what havoc has been wrought under the cover of these activities. Officially the land owners are expected to hand over a certain specific part of the produce to the Government on fixed, though low, rates. It is called the *mujwaza* in Kashmir. Unless there is a drought or a famine in any part of the State, producers of food grains willingly pay the *mujwaza*. But the Government unofficially authorised the Nationalist workers to get hold of all the surplus produce of the peasants under the procurement scheme. Homes of thousands of peasants ware ransacked and every grain of corn removed with the connivance and even the co-operation of the police. In very many cases nothing was left for the peasants and their families to eat. They ware told that the Nationalists gave them the land ; the leaders now needed the produce ; so the peasants should not grumble. There were scuffles between the Nationalist workers and the peasants at innumerable places over this broad-day plunder. At several times police had to resort to violence in which scores of people sustained injuries. Peasants protested, held innumerable meetings, condemned these hooligan methods and carried out processions from their villages to Srinagar to demonstrate their anger.

ON BRINK OF RUIN

Let no one suppose that the grains so cruelly procured by the Nationalist workers reached the stores of the Government for distribution among the urban people at controlled rates. A very big portion of it went into the black market as property of the workers. In summer 1952 the National Conference branches in Badgam and Kulgam tehsils had to openly denounce their own workers for this robbery and loot. The work was then handed over to the co-operative societies. But since they too are wholly under the control of the corrupt Nationalists the results were no better. "The serious complaints made against the co-operatives regarding *khush kharid* (purchase by mutual agreement) and its distribution", stated *Khidmat* on September 10, 1952, "are not all false. There is some truth in them and full inquiry should be made into these without any delay." The conditon of the peasantry in the State as a result of such methods of procurement came up for discussion in the Nationalist Legislature on May 21, 1952 and the Nationalist members severely denounced them.

This is not the only source of vexation for the peasant. It is accepted on all hands that the Kashmir administration is corrupt from top to bottom. "There is hue and cry in our country against bribery" stated Afzal Beg, former Revenue Minister, in a special article published in *Khidmat* on May 25, 1952. "It is estimated that the corruption has assumed an epidemic form which has taken the whole State in it grip. Despite the efforts of the Government it has not been satisfactorily remedied". While in the previous regimes people had to grease the palm of only the Government officials now a new class has to be bribed to live peacefully or to get some official or semi-official work done. This class is that of the National Conference workers who have no ostensible means of livelihood and have to live on the earnings of the peasants. Since the 'freed' peasant has added to his responsibilities by becoming proprietor of land, he has been having more dealings with officials as well as the new class of plunderers. He has to empty his purse in getting the jobs done. "Graft of all kinds seems to flourish in these altitudes", stated the Special Corres-

pondent of *The Hindustan Times* in its issue of June 8, 1953. "What the Wazir Committee has said about it is a closely kept secret. Its findings now before the Government are based, it is believed, on a mass of startling evidence including photographs of witnesses in tears".

While on the one hand the produce of a peasant was either procured as *mujwaza* or forcibly looted as *khush kharid* (purchase by mutual agreement), on the other he was to purchase his necessities of life such as salt, sugar, kerosene oil and cloth at black market prices. Only relatives and friends of the Nationalists in the countryside get these goods at the controlled rates. The Government has placed these things in the hands of the corrupt Nationalist workers who are now the sole prop on which the Nationlist leaders stand. The leaders therefore dare not displease them or deprive them of the advantages. It would be risky to displace them.

The Kashmir Government started hundreds of multi-purpose co-operative societies in the Valley from 1948 onwards. There was no multi-purpose in their formation. Their only function was to distribute the controlled goods handed over to them by the Supplies Department. The co-operatives were a source of employment to the supporters of the National Conference. In their progress reports the Government claimed on the basis of the achievements of the co-operative organisation, to have established a decentralised democratic economy in the Valley. Huge sums borrowed from the Government of India were given to the co-operatives as subsidy. But no regular accounts were maintained by the Nationalist conductors of these societies. The matter was brought to the notice of the Minister in charge and even the Prime Minister but to no purpose. Then suddenly in 1953 in the course of an audit of the accounts it came to light that hundreds of thousands of rupees had been embezzled. In the Central Co-operative Bank at Srinagar no less than 150 thousand rupees were missing while in Ganderbal, Suyabug (Badgam), Baramulla and Pampur multi-purpose co-operative societies embezzlements to the tune of Rs.30,000, Rs.5,000, Rs.50,000 and Rs. 4,000 respectively were reported. All those implicated

without exception were Nationalists. It was not surprising that further auditing was suspended under orders of the Government.

The Nationalist Government have spent more than a crore of rupees on the digging of canals and there is no official publication in which achievements in the sphere of irrigation by bringing vast barren tracts under cultivation are not boastfully referred to. But the fact is that there is no new canal which is irrigating the lands as claimed in the official statements. "The Kashmir people will be surprised to hear," wrote *Martand* on May 20, 1953, under the title "Public Scandal", "that these canals are not benefiting the country in any manner. Most of the fabulous amounts spent from public exchequer on their construction have gone waste. No water flows through these canals. The inauguration ceremonies were held with fanfare but what of those claims which were made at that time?" The Daily after fully describing the dilapidated condition of the newly-constructed canals demanded a public inquiry into this scandalous affair. Recently the demand became country-wide and *The Khidmat*, official organ of the National Conference, was forced to voice the public resentment by saying that "the matter is extremely regretable." "The Irrigation Department spends six lakhs of rupees on the construction of Zainpur Canal, the inauguration ceremony is observed with eclat but the water dries up immediately after," stated *Khidmat*. "Our two representatives went to see the canal and now report that there is no water in it; they found the peasants very resentful. We ask who is responsible for this? An ordinary man is bound to say that the officers of the Irrigation Department as well as the contractors are either corrupt or inefficient or both". It is interesting to note that most of the contractors and the officials are either the upstart Nationalists or the relatives and friends of Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed, Minister in charge. The *Khidmat* made similar sensational disclosures about the working of Sind Hydro-Electric Project and the big water works reservoir at Nishat over both of which nearly a crore of rupees was spent

during 1952-53. This is how the generous loans of the Government of India are squandered in Kashmir today.

Kashmir peasants become idle during winter because the lands cannot be tilled in intense cold and they do not yield any crops. No Government has so far been able to formulate a plan of work to gainfully employ them and thus produce more national wealth. For decades hundreds of thousands of peasants used to leave the Valley at the advent of winter for the plains to work as labourers, wood-cutters and load carriers in big cities of the Punjab such as Rawalpindi, Gujrat, Gujranwala Lahore, Sialkot, Lyallpur, Amritsar and Ludhiana. After labouring for about five months a peasant returned to his home with some earnings in the shape of a piece of cloth, a lump of salt, a tin of tea and some money in his pocket. Since 1947 this exodus has virtually stopped. Due to post-partition mass psychology it is difficult for a Muslim peasant to work in the cities of the East Punjab and the Nationalist politics debars him from going to the cities of the West Punjab. Kashmir Nationalists have been making frequent attempts that the political climate in East Punjab might become congenial for the peasants to work in and the Punjabis holding liberal opinions have been co-operating in these endeavours. As a result there has been some improvement in the situation. But so long as differences between India and Pakistan last there is no possibility that large numbers of peasants will be persuaded to come down and work in the plains of India. Thus the prevailing conditions have deprived these poor people of a source of income.

It has become a fashion not to say anything to defend the case of the absentee landlords. Leftists of all shades vie with each other in denouncing them. No one is prepared to soil his good name by putting in a word in their favour. I too have no desire to support undemocratic demands of the idle rich. But at the risk of being misunderstood I would like to throw a little light on one side of this problem. It is true that most of the expropriated landlords had inherited the land from their forefathers and had derived enough advantages from it.

But what of those who had purchased the land since 1934 when as a result of the recommendations of the Grievances Enquiry Commission and for the first time under Dogra rule, the land was allowed to be sold in the Valley. A and B are two brothers. In 1935 A purchased 1000 *kanals* of land for 30,000 rupees and B purchased buildings for commercial purpose for an equal amount. According to socialistic principles both the brothers have been having unearned incomes for all these past years. Today the Nationalist Government has deprived A of his land but B is still in possession of his property. What kind of justice is this ? And whether the landlord had inherited the land from his forefathers or purchased it in his lifetime if the land is the only source of income to him what sort of justice is it again that he is expropriated without compensation when the State has made no alternate arrangements for his employment or livelihood. By being a landlord he does not cease to be a member of the community.

Let us now consider the law promulgated with the intention of scaling down the indebtedness of the working classes. According to the figures given in the latest publication of the Kashmir Government the Debt Conciliation Boards set up in July 1950 have within a period of 27 months scaled down the debts of the poor people by about 80 per cent. The total number of applications filed before the Boards (including the cases received from civil courts) was 48,195. The debt claimed amounted to Rs. 1,11,22,054 which was settled at Rs. 23,39,952. There can be no manner of doubt that the moneylenders and usurers in Kashmir have been like their class in any part of the world too cruel and too exacting. It is highly essential that the toiling millions of the State should be emancipated from the clutches of this class. But it is not enough that the old debts are scaled down or even entirely liquidated. If side by side with the liquidation of debts adequate and satisfactory arrangements are not made to enable poor working classes to secure loans from responsible and dependable agencies such as co-operative credit societies manned by honest people the law is bound to prove immensely harmful. This is what has happened

in the State. The Jammu National Conference adopted a resolution saying that, "crafty methods have been devised by the moneylenders and usurers to enslave the poor working classes". The resolution revealed that "needy peasants and workers are made to sign documents holding them responsible for double the amounts than are actually lent to them and this is done in presence of magistrates so that it may be proved, if need be, that the transactions are authentic". Commenting on this resolution the *Khidmat* observed :

> "A new problem has arisen with the promulgation of this law. At the time when a peasant has to purchase seed, bullock, agricultural implements or such other things he is unable to find money. If an artisan needs some money where can he get it ? The capitalists or usurers no longer help him because they feel aggrieved on account of the new law and, rightly or wrongly, complain against the dishonesty of the debtors. Therefore ordinarily it cannot be expected that they will lend money to peasants and artisans."

In these circumstances very few peasants who have become the new proprietors can invest any money for the improvement of land. Indeed they already feel sick of this "freedom" which has brought manifold troubles and little gains in its wake. Thus the myth that the Nationalist Government has conferred a big boon on the working classes by passing this law is unfounded. The fact is that it has added to the miseries of the pauperised masses. "Ironically enough", stated the Special Correspondent of *Hindustan Times* who toured the Valley in June 1953 in his despatch, "the beneficiaries themselves have yet to reap the full advantage out of their ownership which is currently operating more as a liability than an asset ; for, the cancellation of agricultural indebtedness, with the stroke of a pen, has left a serious void in the rural credit system which the regime has been unable to fill, with the result that, more often than not, the new owner has no money to buy a bullock or agricultural implements with". When questioned why the Government did not make adequate alternate arrangements to supply credit to the peasantry Abdullah laconically stated that "he needed 200 crores of rupees for the purpose". Meanwhile the wretched toilers must suffer.

ON BRINK OF RUIN

Honest and well-meaning people outside the State ask: When the Government have conferred the boon of the proprietorship of land on lakhs of peasants and freed them from large and long standing debts why are Nationalists still hesitant to get the future of the State settled through an impartial and fair plebiscite ? Surely, they say, the grateful peasants and other working classes who form the large majority of the people will vote as the Nationalist leaders want them to do. "It is baffling", observed the Special Correspondent of *Hindustan Times*, "that the newly-won ownership should have failed to generate buoyancy of gratitude on a remarkable scale". After reading what we have said above the riddle will be solved for honest-intentioned critics. By these ill-conceived reforms no less than by their anti-democratic activities, hooliganism and gangster methods the Nationalist Government have only created an economic chaos in the country. While no class has actually benefited some have undoubtedly suffered. Through these reforms Nationalists had expected to derive a political advantage. Major portion of the land in the State belonged to Hindu landlords. In Kashmir Province the land owned by Hindus was out of all proportion to their number. The tillers of the soil in the Valley are exclusively Muslim. The Nationalists had thought that by this device they would be able to popularise their cause among the Muslims, particularly the peasantry. But what has actually been the result ? Apart from their emotional attachment with Pakistan for religious reasons the Muslim working classes are, due to all round suppression and oppression, as sullen, dissatisfied and hostile as ever. If anything the Nationalists have made upper class State Hindus also bitter against themselves by the implementation of the reforms.

When the Nationalists came to power they packed the administration with their relatives and friends in utter disregard of their rights, qualifications and experience. Many tried and old State servants were discharged or pensioned off to make room for them. Abdullah appointed his own son-in-law, Ghulam Mohammed Shah, a raw young lawyer in his early

twenties as Controller of Supplies, his brother-in-law, Ghulam Qadir, as Deputy Minister for Tourism. Afzal Beg's brothers became high gazetted officers. There is hardly any of Beg's relatives who is not in Government service. One of his domestic servants was arrested for raping a minor Harijan girl in 1945 in Jammu when Beg was a Minister. The culprit was convicted by a court and sentenced to five years rigorous imprisonment. On appeal the High Court considered the punishment inadequate for such a heinous crime and enhanced it to seven years. He was serving the sentence in 1947 in the Srinagar Central Jail when the Nationalists came to power. He was not only released but also appointed a head warder in the same Jail.

In 1945 *Khidmat* reported about a subordinate official of the Kashmir Government that he was taking bribes and had lost in one night Rupees 3000 in gambling. An official inquiry was instituted into the affair; the official was found guilty; he was discharged from Government service. Quietly and intelligently he joined the ranks of the National Conference, courted arrest in "Quit Kashmir" agitation and became a Departmental Head under the Nationalist regime in 1947.

Such instances are by no means rare in Kashmir today. The new administrators carried their traditions of *goondaism* into the offices. Frequent reports appear in the local Press of the disgraceful doings of the upstart officers. "It is a general complaint", said *Khidmat* on July 30, 1952, "that some big State officers treat their subordinates and also the public in a way which is unbecoming. They resort to beatings and use vituperative language".

On the eve of introduction of their agrarian reforms the Nationalists claimed that a peasant, having freed himself from the slavery of landlord and having secured proprietorship of land, would, as a willing worker, produce more than he used to do before. That appeared plausible. But according to the latest available statistics it is clear that though, besides transferring the ownership of a large part of the agricultural land to peasants, big tracts of soil including *rakhs* of the

Maharaja have been newly brought under plough, the overall production of food grains and other crops has fallen by about five per cent. This might have been partly due to drought and flood but the main reason is the sullenness, dissatisfaction and indifference of the peasantry. Mention may also be made here of the vast area of land lying along the whole of the three hundred mile long cease-fire line which has remained uncultivated for six years. Some of this land is very fertile but no peasants are prepared to work on them for obvious reasons.

There is a lesson for the State politicians especially of the leftist bent of mind in the unsuccessful experiment of the Nationalists. Economic reforms, however attractive, desirable, and needed, have to be planned and implemented with caution under an overall comprehensive scheme. It is very dangerous to have half-baked socialist ideas. Kashmir Nationalists have done a great disservice by introducing these ill-conceived reforms; they have damaged the economy which it will take many years to repair.

The greatest factor contributing to the economic chaos in the State is the insecurity at the present and the uncertainty about the future due to the accession dispute. There is no doubt that with the end of British Imperialism and coming of Independence the whole of the subcontinent of India was thrown into turmoil but now, after six years, things have returned to normal and people have settled down as best they could in India and Pakistan. Even millions of refugees in both the countries know where they stand and what their future, good or bad, is. Such is not the case with Kashmir. In this State no one knows what will happen to his country; whether it will permanently remain with India or go to Pakistan. Neither the Hindus of Kashmir feel sure that the present union of the State with India will endure nor are the Muslims convinced that the State will accede to Pakistan. The dilatory method by which the U.N.O. has handled the Kashmir dispute has created distrust of this world organisation among all classes of people; it has produced a strange morbid mentality among them. With the failure of every effort on the

part of any U.N. Representative or deadlock in negotiations between India and Pakistan the Nationalists and the pro-India elements become jubilant in the hope that no plebiscite will be held to decide the issue and the *status quo* will continue for ever and at least the parts of the State on this side of the cease-fire line will be ultimately integrated with India. But with the renewal of efforts to settle the dispute such hopes are shattered; the turn of pro-Pakistan elements comes for merry-making which, however, also proves short-lived. This see-saw of emotions has been going on for the past six years; it has created allround frustration. Very few people now attach much value to the Resolutions of the Security Council or the activities of the U. N. Representative. They have ceased to be of great importance. Recently hopes were renewed by the friendly statements of the two Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan that all the outstanding issues including the Kashmir dispute would be settled by direct negotiations. But new difficulties crop up that shatter the hopes. So the uncertainty about the future persists and no one is sure what might be in store for him in the days and months and years to come.

Congressmen and the Nationalists have left no stone unturned to restore confidence among the State people. Dozens of times has Nehru emphatically declared that Kashmir is part of India and no power on earth can divide them. Month after month and year after year Nationalists have held conventions, conferences and meetings where resolutions were adopted declaring that the State's accession to India is permanent. At every time that such declarations and pronouncements were made in the past the Nationalists had thought that the uncertainty about the future had been wiped off and the people would feel reassured. But beyond affording an agreeable topic for discussion in the Indian Press and temporarily pleasing the wishful thinkers among the State Hindus all these announcements have proved futile. No section of the people in any part of the State, not even the best friends, supporters and sympathisers of the Nationalists, feel in any way reassured. All classes and communities are as apprehensive as they have been ever

since the Kashmir dispute start ed in 1947. In a speech which he delivered in the Emporium Garden at Srinagar on May 8, 1952, fifteen months before he was dismissed from office, Abdullah made a frank admission of the serious economic conditions in those parts of the State where his Government functioned. This speech was reported in full by the *Khidmat*, official organ of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, on its front page in its issue dated May 10, 1952. According to this report Abdullah observed :

> "Kashmir is today standing at crossroads. The fate of this country has not been decided yet. This question has been before the U.N. for many years. Attempts are being made to solve it, but no one knows what the solution may be. There is a tension in the atmosphere owing to this. It is difficult to complete any work in these circumstances. For instance people do not invest any capital in business and when people do not invest it is difficult to progress. After all Government cannot do everything. Many things are to be achieved by the people themselves. As an example Kashmir is a place where visitors come and go. For their comfort hotels must be opened. But many friends have told me that due to uncertain conditions they cannot open any hotels. This is only an instance. I can give other instances of the same kind to show how, due to the present conditions, the progress of our country has stopped".

In these words Abdullah stated only bare facts. Significantly no report of this speech was published in the Indian Press. Probably it was considered damaging to the Indian cause which consistently maintained that Kashmir was making remarkable progress under Indian supervision. But Abdullah had the habit of occasionally describing the plight of Kashmir to which he had himself been instrumental in reducing it. "The sword of uncertainty is hanging over the heads of State people which has ruined them", he told a gathering of Nationalist workers in Srinagar on July 25, 1953 as reported by *Khidmat*. "All the works of progress and prosperity have come to a stop. No construction work can be accomplished. No one seems to be prepared to invest any capital and no one comes forth to start a big industry, business or trade with composure of mind. Granted that nature has given us forests, mines and similar other sources of wealth. But to tap them capital is needed and that can be available only when uncertain conditions are ended." Abdullah reiterated these views three days later on

July 31, at Ganderbal. "It is impossible", he admitted publicly, "in the present conditions of uncertainty to raise the economic standard of the masses or even to give people an honest and efficient administration which finds itself subject to innumerable internal and external tensions."

This uncertainty about the future has paralysed every one in every sphere of business, trade and industry. No one is prepared to invest any money in any business because who can guarantee that the present regime will last for long. As a matter of fact all businessmen are withdrawing the capital they had put in any branch of trade and commerce before 1947, as rapidly as they can. Already many Hindus have closed their concerns and left the country or are just on the spot carrying on without further involving themselves. Had purchasers been forthcoming many more business houses would have changed hands. At present several running concerns are for sale in the Valley but few people come forward to purchase them. Every branch of trade has therefore suffered. Not a single new business concern, employing a dozen or so workers, has been started during the past six years.

If this is the state of mind of the local businessmen no one can complain against the caution observed by outsiders in investing capital in the State. Prior to 1947 during the Second World War and after, many enterprising capitalists had come forward with well-thoughtout schemes of industrialisation of the State. Indeed some of them had actually made certain beginnings on modest scales. With good prospects in view and in the hope of doing substantial business some well-established banks had opened branches in Srinagar and other towns. All these have closed down during the past years. Not even one outsider is prepared to invest a farthing so long as the present uncertainty and the insecurity last.

Private construction work has also come to a standstill. People who can afford to build their own homes and who need them hesitate to spend money on their construction. Compared to the building work done prior to 1947 what is accomplished now is but a small fraction.

ON BRINK OF RUIN

Thousands of artisans, petty shopkeepers and others used to borrow small sums of money from private bankers for the advancement of their business. These transactions have stopped partly because of the ill-conceived regulations of the Government but mainly because of the uncertainty about future. Bankers being mostly Hindus do not advance any loans under the present circumstances. Besides hampering their small business the abnormality in age-old money transactions has upset the domestic life of thousands of middle class and working people. The poor classes used to borrow money on marriage ceremony and other festivals by promising to pay back in easy instalments. There is no other source from which they can get any advances now.

The uncertainty about future has ruined the economy of the people jointly and severally from the highest to the lowest in the State. It has created insoluble problems for every one. In the prevailing suspense a Kashmiri can neither take decisions nor leave things undecided. It is slow death for all excepting the Nationalist clique who are making tons of money over the blood and tears of the pauperised people of the State. The boom that the ruin of the State people brought to the Nationalists can be imagined by one example of the riches of Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed and his brothers. Bakhshi was a salesman of Khadi Bhandar getting Rs. 20 p.m. when he joined politics. His father and brothers were petty tailors. There was no other source of income. Today the family is known to be the richest in the Valley owning hard cash and immovable property such as cinema houses and palatial buildings worth nearly fifty lakhs of rupees.

On March 6, 1953 the *Khidmat* stated in its editorial: "There is the danger of people being overwhelmed by frustration. We have to confess that despondency has already penetrated into them to some extent and many people are heard saying that under the old autocratic rule they enjoyed more amenities than they do now". Yet Jawaharlal Nehru told the Indian Parliament that "the part of the State now under the Kashmir Government is making remarkable progress economically, socially and politically". Are these the signs of that "remarkable progress"?

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

THE HEROIC RESISTANCE

"If you go to Kashmir you will find normalcy and that the State is functioning adequately but behind the normalcy is that constant tension because of the enemy trying to come in to create trouble and disturb". —**Jawaharlal Nehru**

THREE days after Abdullah was released from Badami Bagh Cantonment by the royal clemency of the Dogra Maharaja he went to Delhi to meet the Prime Minister of India. In a Press conference at the capital he was asked what did he think of those who did not agree with him in politics and the accession issue. Vaguely he replied : "We know how to deal with them". Only twenty days after this, on assumption of power by the Nationalists, there were holocausts in various parts of the State. In the Jammu Province thousands of Muslims were massacred when Abdullah was the Emergency Administrator, the sole master of the country.

It would be unfair to assert that the Nationalist leaders consciously instigated the slaughter of the innocent Muslims in Jammu but there is not a shred of sincerity in their utterances in which they use to shed crocodile tears over these holocausts accusing Dogra Hindus of heinous crimes. For, they cannot deny that in the speeches which they delivered in November 1947 while the liquidation of Muslims was in operation in all its fury they held the victims of the ghastly crime themselves responsible for their horrible fate. Abdullah, as already stated, declared that Muslims had let loose their tongues in praise of Pakistan which brought about their ruin. His only regret was that the Dogra Hindus killed innocent Gujjars, barbers and vegetable vendors along with the supporters of Pakistan. Thus it was the deliberate policy of the Nationalists from the very start to permit only such people to exist in the State as were

either totally ignorant of politics or were in entire agreement with the ruling clique; others were either to be liquidated or externed from the State.

With the departure of Mahatma Gandhi from Kashmir in the first week of August 1947 it had become clear to the meanest understanding that all lovers of freedom in the State particularly those who advocated the State's accession to Pakistan were heading for trouble and the new Janak Singh Government would not tolerate any liberal outlook in politics. It was evident that the sole brunt of this repression was to be borne by the Muslim Conference which demanded the State's accession to Pakistan and the Kisan Mazdoor Conference which counselled that the future of Kashmir should be decided by the democratic method of a fair referendum on the basis of adult franchise. The leaders of both the parties were therefore making feverish preparations to stand the blow that was about to fall.

The anti-democratic policy of the Maharaja's Government came into full play by the middle of August. The more the Nationalist leaders came nearer to the Dogra ruler and the Indian Government the harder became the onslaughts of Kashmir authorities on the civil liberties of the people. By the time the Maharaja's emissaries had concluded the deal with Abdullah in the Badami Bagh Cantonment the Government had completely suppressed the freedom of expression and association in almost all parts of the Valley and the adjoining areas where Muslims are in majority. The District Magistrate of Srinagar had peremptorily issued an order that no meetings of political nature were to be held even "inside any house, hotel or houseboat". The publication of *Milat* and *Jauhar*, two organs of the Kashmir Muslim Conference, had been suspended; *The Daily Hamdard*, organ of the Kashmir Socialists, *The Kashmir Times*, an independent English journal and *Islah*, a liberal Muslim weekly, were asked to get every word for publication pre-censored by the Publicity Officer of the Government. The sole crime of these popular representatives of public opinion was that they were critical of Kashmir's accession to India which was to be brought about without, and even against, the consent of the State people.

It is needless to state that the National Conference and other pro-India organisations, their leaders and their publicity organs were totally exempt from any such restrictions. Indeed the restriction of pre-censorship imposed by the Kak Government on the *Khidmat* was withdrawn by the new regime.

Simultaneously with the launching of this policy by the Government, the volunteers and leaders of the National Conference also started their own acts of high handedness with impunity. What the Maharaja's Government was hesitant to do was left to be done by these minions. All those suspected of anti-Nationalist tendencies were beaten on highways or wherever found in broad daylight. Abdur Rehman Mitha, proprietor of the *Kashmir Times* who has been to jail no less than eight times in connection with the Congress movements in Bombay, was attacked and badly bruised on Residency Road in front of Hadow Memorial High School, a highbrow locality. Noor Mohammed, General Secretary of the Kashmir Socialist Party, was caught hold of in Anantnag, pelted, spat at and taken in a procession through the streets by the Nationalist *goondas*. Mohammad Iqbal Chapri, a member of State Legislature, was beaten at the door of a hotel and his clothes torn. Thousands of copies of *Hamdard* were snatched from the hands of hawkers and burned on roadside. And the police looked on unconcerned and unmoved.

Undaunted and undeterred the fighters for freedom functioned patiently and steadfastly in face of all these provocations, hardships and trials. To fill up the deficiency created by muzzling of the Press a series of posters, leaflets, pamphlets and bulletins came in streams from where no one could tell. These were cyclostyled or written by hand. With one voice all these reminded the patriotic people of their duty to motherland in the grave hour of national calamity. "Freedom or death" was the slogan printed in flashing red letters at the top of all this literature.

During the first fortnight of October the Maharaja's Police raided innumerable houses and thoroughly searched them to find where the anti-Government literature was pro-

duced. Nearly a battalion of armed policemen went to Dyalgam and Khushipura in the Anantnag district, the stronghold of the Kisan Movement, and ransacked all the houses of Kisan leaders as well as the office of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference with no better result. The police officials could only seize printed copies of the resolution of the Party regarding the accession dispute and a few unobjectionable hand-written posters. But Abdus Salam Yatu, president, Kisan Mazdoor Conference, and Mir Abdul Aziz, an ardent fighter for Kashmir's freedom, who were present in the office were warned of dire consequences if they indulged in anti-Government activities. The rough and unchivalrous manner in which these raids were carried out by the police were highly discreditable and gave a foretaste of what was to come soon.

The Nationalists came to power on October 26, 1947. I have already described in some detail what they did with their opponents and others whom they suspected of harbouring hostile tendencies. They had thought that with the imprisonment of brave and vocal members of the opposition they would be able to rule the country peacefully and without any let or hinderance. But before long they saw that they were wrong in their estimation. The torch of freedom could not be extinguished by throwing the leaders of the Freedom Movement in the cells and dungeons. The dynamic times had stirred the masses to action. Only a few days after the establishment of the Emergency Administration about fifty thousand people gathered in the Polo Ground at Srinagar and effectively protested against the importation of the foreign troops and the atrocities of the Nationalists. The Administration was terrified and it was with great difficulty that the event passed off without any untoward incident.

The Nationalists have made it impossible for any party or individual, not in entire agreement with them particularly on basic issues, to function constitutionally. But there is hardly any town or village in the State where underground workers are not in existence pursuing their mission in a silent and steadfast manner. If the morale of the Kashmir people has continu-

ed to remain high in spite of the unprecedented trials and tribulations that they had to face during the past six years it is because of the presence of these devoted and selfless workers of the Freedom Movement in every part of the country. Not only do the underground workers maintain the morale of the people at a high level, they contact almost every unbiased outsider who comes to study the situation for himself. "We deplore the mistaken notion of some foreign countries", growled Nehru while addressing an A.I.C.C. meeting in Bombay in 1948, "who take it for granted that if a country has Muslim as its majority then it should automatically join Pakistan. Such notion has no relation to the facts of the situation. We resent this attitude of those countries who think that all Muslims are Pakistanis. The Kashmir problem is not a Hindu-Muslim problem for the reason that the majority of the population in Kashmir are Muslim and they are followers of Sheikh Abdullah and have endorsed the Maharaja's decision to accede to India". But the fact is that all those distinguished foreigners who come to Kashmir with a sincere desire to ascertain the real facts and to understand the truth about the accession dispute are forced to disagree with this view of the Prime Minister of India. Who gives them the true picture of present-day Kashmir ? It is these underground workers who function patiently and boldly.

The U.N. Commission visited the Valley in summer 1948. All conceivable precautions were taken by the Government to see that no opponent of the Nationalists could approach the members of the Commission. The residence of the Commissioners was closely watched by scores of the Special Police Staff Officers. Wherever the Commissioners went hundreds of the C.I.D. men in plain clothes followed them. Even thei mail was scrutinised and censored before it was delivered.

In order to make them feel that they were free to move, hear and see things for themselves in the State of Jammu and Kashmir the Commissioners were invited to visit some educational institutions in Srinagar. S. P. College came first in the list. All of a sudden before the guests arrived the College hall resounded with anti-Nationalist and pro-Pakistan slogans.

Not only in the hall; the slogans were raised outside from the portals of the College to a long distance on the road by which the Commissioners came. Who were the demonstrators? College students inside the building and many educated women led by Begum Abdul Ghani, Inspectress of Schools and Begum Shaukat Ali, wife of the General Secretary of the Muslim Conference, outside. The police swooped down upon the demonstrators, pulled them by the hair, dragged them on the streets and sent them to imprisonment. Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed arrived at the scene only to hear that the applecart which he had arranged with such care had been upset. The Commissioners had come to know of the opposition.

The Commissioners expressed a desire to pay a visit to the Central Jail, Jammu. There were hundreds of political detenus in that prison. Immediately those leaders who, it was expected might enlighten the Commissioners about the real conditions obtaining in the State, were transferred to Bahu Fort. They included Noor Mohammed, General Secretary of the Kashmir Socialist Party, Abdul Ghani Renthoo, a prominent leader of the Muslim Conference, Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, Begum Shaukat Ali, Begum Jahan Ara and others. The Commissioners arrived at the appointed time when there was complete silence within the four walls of the jail; it seemed not even the wind was allowed to blow. Bakhshi accompanied the distinguished visitors. Like a bolt from the blue a loud voice—Pakistan Zindabad—came from the west A seventy year old man approached the guests with a hand-written white sheet. One of the Commissioners smilingly took the document, read it and then deposited it in his pocket. It was full of the account of the misdeeds of Nationalists and explained in incoherent, broken and incorrect English the demands of the State people. How had the old man come out of his cell nobody could say. It was utterly baffling and mystifying. When the Commissioners were gone the old man paid heavily for the deed; he was pounded upon and beaten; his ribs were broken and he lay in the jail dispensary for months to heal them.

What the Nationalists did to hide the political stench

in the State from reaching the outsiders and how heroically the fighters for freedom, the patriotic and brave resisters, told the real story to those whom they considered helpful in any way for their holy cause may best be described in the words of Dr. Josef Korbel, a member of the U.N. Commission. In an article published in an American Magazine, *The Commonweal*, he has portrayed the picture of miserable Kashmir. It is true to facts and it is graphic. Here is an excerpt :

> "The people of Srinagar would secretly come to see us or start to talk to us in shop's. They beseeched us—often in tears—to liberate them from the Indian rule. On one occasion I was in Baramulla, a town thirty-five miles from Srinagar. Half of the town was in ruin. We went from one place to another jumping over piles of bricks and stones followed by thousands of the local people and surrounded by the Indian police. Someone made a speech claiming that all Kashmiris want to live in India. Most people, looking like half-dead wrecks, listened with apathy. Here and there one could hear a slogan shouted : "Long Live India, long live the Hindus and Muslims in a United India". I had lived long enough in a totalitarian country (Yugoslavia) to recognise the feigned spontaneity of such demonstrations."

And what happened then ? Dr. Josef proceeds :

> Suddenly a young man stepped out of the crowd, shouting in English : "We want to join Pakistan'. The police dealt with him quickly. The Commission asked the local authorities to release him and bring him to the Mayor's house. A few minutes later the Mayor announced that the man was waiting for us. When he appeared we saw that he was someone other than the youngster whom we had seen a little while before. We told the Mayor that this was not the same man, to which he replied that it was the same man. However, the man said : "Yes, I am somebody else. My friend is in prison, but it does not matter. I can also tell you that we want to join Pakistan."

It is not only the politically conscious Kashmiris who fight for the liberation of Kashmir. Every son and daughter of the soil is doing what little he can in his position in life. Most people of the Valley non-co-operated with the Indian Military during the days when operations were in full swing. Indeed they refused to supply them with necessities of life for which fighting forces have to depend on local people. The country folk had been instructed by the fighters for freedom not to be friendly towards the occupation armies and if forced to supply goods they should sell them at as high prices as could

be secured. When the Commanders of the Indian army complained against this attitude of the people the Nationalists brought all governmental repression to bear upon the *numberdars, zaildars* and other petty village officials to coerce the masses to become co-operative and helpful but the resistance movement was so organised and powerful that the Nationalists had ultimately to give up the attempt in despair. Curiously enough, the Nationalist leaders subsequently also posed as patriots and, in private meetings expressed pleasure that the Kashmiris had been extorting tons of money out of the occupation forces.

Extremists in India have bitterly criticised the Nehru Government for signing cease-fire agreement before the entire State was occupied by the Indian forces. Had they known the inner story of the army's advance they would have never talked like this. No army in modern times can successfully conduct a campaign when people in its rear are non-co-operative if not also hostile. For obvious reasons Nehru could not admit this fact publicly. It would have been impolitic for him to do so. Besides, he had been telling the world that Kashmiris themselves had invited the Indian armies to save their homeland. Nevertheless one of the chief causes why India agreed to the cease-fire by the end of 1948 and before the Indian armies could proceed beyond Uri was this heroic resistance movement of the Kashmiris in the Valley.

When the war stopped on January 1, 1949, to the relief of all concerned the Nationalist Government very cleverly arranged the transfer of the detained Muslim Conference leaders to Pakistan. The Government also granted every facility to those Muslim political workers, who were not in jails, to go to that country if they desired to do so. Many of them committed the mistake of accepting the offer and crossed the cease-fire line. The Nationalists had thought that without any experienced and educated leaders to guide them the Kashmiris would cease to be troublesome and rebellious. But leaderless mobs with unchecked and unregulated but ruffled emotions become more dangerous. With no scope for constitutional

activity and without any popular or reputable leader to guide them the energies of the people began to flow in wrong and unhealthy channels. There were sporadic outbursts of violence.

In 1948 a number of people were arrested in different parts of the Kashmir Valley on a report that large stocks of arms, ammunition and bombs had been secretly dumped in various places and there was a conspiracy to overthrow the Nationalist Government and to bring about Kashmir's accession to Pakistan by violent means. Where did the war material come from ? It is believed it was imported from Pakistan via Tosh Maidan and Badgam. Such well-laid and deep was the plan that none of the thousands of spies of the Nationalist Government came to know about it till the ammunition reached the Valley. Those who were accused of the conspiracy included lawyers, professors, high Government officers and students. They were tried in a court, convicted and sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment ranging from three to ten years. Those punished were: Ghulam Nabi Bazaz, Rashid Mir, Iqbal Butt, Mohi-ud-Din Pandit, Sheikh Iftikhar Ahmed, Ghulam Mohammed Kar, Mohammed Ali Butt, Dost Mohammed, Sadiq Butt, Aziz Butt, Ahmed Karnai, Qazi Ghulam Hassan, Ahad Butt, Karim Din, Sultan Bhat, Rasool Khan, Gani Magre, G.A. Naqi. Two of them Mohammed Ali Butt and G.A. Naqi, both lawyers and erstwhile workers of the National Conference, subsequently absconded with the assistance of the jail officials and managed to reach Muzaffarbad where they are now again taking part in the local politics.

With the assistance of the Indian Military Command the Kashmir Government raised a National Militia composed of the local people for the defence of the State. It was a revolutionary step fraught with great potentialities and far-reaching consequences. After many centuries the Kashmiris, both Muslims and Hindus, were recruited in the armed forces of their homeland. Ordinarily every lover of Kashmir would have eagerly welcomed the move. But the political objective of the force was suspect. And the Militiamen were torn by divided loyalty and conflicting emotions. Would they serve the freedom of their country

or carry out the behests of the unrepresentative Government which had been imposed on the people by foreign imperialism against their will?

Early in 1948 soon after the Militia was formed the Nationalists wanted to assure the Government of India and also prove it before the world that Kashmiris were eager to fight against the Azad Kashmir forces and Pakistan. A squad of Militia was sent to the front to fight side by side with the Indian forces. Within a few days of the despatch of this squad news reached Srinagar that some of the Militiamen had gone over to the Azad Forces and those who still remained behind had exchanged their new 303 rifles with the old and outdated weapons of the tribesmen. The Militiamen were speedily arrested and sent to Jammu Central Jail.

Another conspiracy to damage the occupation forces is said to have been unearthed in summer 1949 when a number of Militiamen were arrested and sent for court martial to the headquarters of the Indian Army at Delhi.

Quite understandably the authorities have not allowed the news about these events to get published. But inside the State it is known that many of the Muslim members of the Militia who had been recruited and given employment with the purpose of becoming soldiers in the cause of National Conference and accession to India are among the opponents of the Nationalist regime.

Not infrequently one hears about cases of political incendiarism in different parts of the State. Dozens of bridges both big and small have been burned down. When in 1952 the bridge near Singhpura on the Srinagar-Baramulla Road was reduced to ashes the traffic came to a standstill for a couple of days. This was a serious case of sabotage and the police made vigorous efforts to apprehend the culprits but no clue could be found to lay their hands upon anybody. The building of the Kashmir Radio mysteriously caught fire and before the fire brigade could come to extinguish it large part of the building had been gutted. The purpose of the action was not in doubt. The perpetrators of the crime wanted to stop the functioning of the important

means of the publicity and propaganda of the Nationalists. In 1951-52 rest houses and other Government property in the interior of the Valley became the targets. The rest house at Trikker was completely destroyed by fire; another bungalow in the Handwara Tehsil suffered the same fate. The Tehsil building in Baramulla along with the official record was burned down in March, 1953.

Vandalism and sabotage does not end with the Government property. Never in the history of the State under the rule of the Dogras have so many fires broken out in the towns and villages of the Valley as during the last four years. Hundreds of houses were razed to the ground in Anantnag when fire broke out in the town twice, first in May, 1952 and a second time in April, 1953. Shopian saw something worse when the town caught fire in December, 1952. In Markot (Gurez) one hundred houses were destroyed by fire. The names of other towns and villages where huge properties were gutted are Chopan Arigam (in April, 1953), Kreri (in December 1952), Gorapura (in December '52), Codipura Langet (in November 1952), Handwara (in October 1952), Tarahama (in October 1952), and Aribal Tral (in June, 1953). The cases mentioned are only for the duration of eight months from October, 1952 to June, 1953. Thousands of poor people have been left penniless and shelterless by these incidents. It is suspected that all these cases were of incendiarism and arson. Dissatisfied, suppressed, and victimised political opponents of the Nationalist Government are resorting to these evil deeds to harass the authorities unmindful of misery and hardship that it causes to their own unfortunate and poor countrymen whom they want to liberate.

Lest the world becomes wiser about the real conditions in the State, the Nationalist Government is cautious and keen to see that no reports about these highly significant incidents and developments are published in the outside Press. And probably the Government of India hold the same view. The usual argument that publication of such reports will help the enemy is put forth in defence of the policy.

Excepting in the case of Trikker Dak Bungalow in which Dr. Abdul Majid, a Muslim Conference leader of Anantnag, and a few others stood trial the Nationalist Government has been unable to apprehend those responsible for these deeds. What is the reason ? Is the Government so inefficient or is it in league with the culprits ? The truth is that the Nationalists have become so unpopular that anyone who is out to harass the administration, be it by constitutional or unconstitutional means, peaceful or violent methods, can easily secure support of the people. Doubtless, there are not many who approve of the violent deeds especially when they are directed against the people but when constitutional ways are denied to sensitive patriots the field is thrown wide open for those who are prone to act in anti-social manner.

Brave sons of Kashmir have not been afraid of uttering truth at the face of the powerful Nationalist leaders whenever occasion demanded to do so. In May, 1949, a big procession of hungry and starved women was taken out in Srinagar which made anti-Government demonstrations outside the Secretariat buildings. Abdullah came out to meet the demonstrators and hear their complaint. A political worker accompanying the procession told some unpalatable facts to the Prime Minister. Forgetting in his indignation that he was the head of the administration Abdullah pounced upon the spokesman and beat him with a *danda* till the victim fell unconscious and was carried home in that condition.

A few weeks later another hungry man approached Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed when he was seated in a parked car on the Residency Road. The man stated that he had suffered no less than Bakhshi for the cause of freedom but was now refused even a ration ticket. He objected to the luxurious living of the Nationalist leader. Bakhshi came out of the car and getting hold of the complainant struck him till he fell flat on the road. The policeman on duty completed the affair by trampling upon the victim. These are not unusual incidents in the present-day Kashmir. It will need a volume to collect such atrocious deeds of the Nationalists.

The Security Council deputed Sir Owen Dixon in spring

1950 to mediate between India and Pakistan and get the accession dispute settled. Again the Nationalists did their best to see that none of their opponents in the Valley approached the U.N. Representative. But right at his official residence in Srinagar the Socialists submitted a memorandum to him in June, 1950 soliciting creation of conditions for the holding of an early, fair and impartial plebiscite. The Socialists demanded release of all political prisoners, withdrawal of foreign armies and formation of an all-parties Government in the State.

On August 1, 1950, Prem Nath Bazaz was released from detention but was immediately taken by the police to Pathankot and served with an order externing him from the State. He reached Delhi on the 3rd. Some Kashmiri Pandit members of the Socialist Party and Kisan Mazdoor Conference including Shyam Lal Yechha, Pitamber Nath Dhar Fani, D. N. Bhan, Arjan Nath and others had already been forced to leave the Valley. They now met and decided to form a new political organization, the Kashmir Democratic Union, with the following specific objects in view :

(a) "To get the Kashmir dispute solved amicably and peacefully, between India and Pakistan according to the will of the State people by the democratic method of fair and impartial plebiscite.

(b) To popularise the idea of partition for the State so that different homogeneous cultural regions may get the fullest freedom of self-determination in the plebiscite.

(c) To secure effective safeguards for the minorities in all parts of the State in a future setup in the final settlement.

(d) To bring the grievances of the State people to the notice of the Government of India.

(e) To persuade the Government of India by constitutional and peaceful means to replace the present Government of Kashmir by an efficient and sympathetic administration during the transition period.

(f) To supply authentic information about conditions in the State to the outside world."

Jagan Nath Sathu who had been boldly and steadfastly working in the Valley for the cause of liberation in the absence of the Socialist leaders kept in detention during 1947-50 came to Delhi in November, 1950 to join the Union.

In March, 1951, the Kashmir Government released Abdul

Salam Yatu, President of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference, took him to Suchetgarh on western border of the State and sent him to Pakistan on condition that he will not return to his homeland. It brings the essence of the mentality of the Kashmir Nationalists into bold relief that though Abdus Salam believes in Secularism, is opposed to the Muslim League ideology and had made (the reader will recall) a trenchant criticism of the two-nation theory in his presidential address at the Kabamarg Congress, yet, the Nationalists sent him to Pakistan as they had ordered Prem Nath Bazaz, who was vehemently opposed to Gandhian ideology and Hindu Nationalism, to go to India. The evil-intentioned Nationalists thought that both of these fighters for the freedom of Kashmir would become helpless in the circumstances in which they were placed. Surely they must have been disillusioned by what followed.

Soon after he was pushed into the Pakistan territory Abdus Salam Yatu established the refugee headquarters of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference at Rawalpindi. Some workers of the Conference were already in Pakistan. Mohammed Amin Haider and Mohammed Akram were among them. They launched a campaign to secularise the Kashmir Liberation Movement and to bring it out of the communal and sectional mire into which it had sunk in Azad Kashmir. They also, in co-operation with the Pakistan Socialists, tried to awaken International Socialism to the grave risks involved in the undecided dispute over Kashmir. Yatu and his colleagues prepared a memorandum giving dispassionate, objective and factual view of the issue to be submitted to the Asian Socialists Conference scheduled to meet in Indonesia in January 1954.

When Dr. Frank Graham arrived in India in summer 1951, a memorandum was presented to him on behalf of the State people in New Delhi by a delegation comprising of the representatives of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference, the Kashmir Socialist Party and the Kashmir Democratic Union. It was subsequently published as a joint manifesto of the three parties under the signatures of Prem Nath Bazaz, Abdus Salam Yatu and Noor Mohammed. The publication of this document opened

a new era in the history of the Freedom Movement in the State. Until then it was believed that the movement for the liberation of Kashmir from the iron grip of Indian Imperialism was conducted by only the Muslim communalists. The manifesto, which, it must be remembered, was published in India, showed that the movement had the whole-hearted support of progressive Hindus as well as leftist Muslims who did not agree with the Pakistan ideology. It was no longer called a Muslim movement but the struggle of the people of Kashmir for the emancipation of their motherland.

The publication of the manifesto so unnerved the Kashmir Nationalists that they prevailed upon the Government of India to persecute the members of the Kashmir Democratic Union in Delhi. Under the entirely baseless charge that he was sending news despatches to Pakistan through a wireless transmitter the residence of Prem Nath Bazaz in New Delhi was raided on August 22, 1951 by a big posse of police under the orders of the local authorities. Simultaneously the office of the Kashmir Democratic Union was also searched. Both premises were ransacked and every bit of paper was scrutinised but nothing incriminating was found. Unafraid by such harassment the Kashmir Socialists living in India vigorously set upon the task of exposing the pretensions of the Nationalists. Thousands of copies of the manifesto were printed in English and Urdu and widely distributed not only in the Valley but all over the sub-continent and even in the foreign countries.

The Manifesto deplored the "repeated failures of the U.N. Security Council and its representatives to bring about the final settlement of the dispute which had brought unspeakable hardships and indescribable miseries for millions living in the beautiful land." It deprecated the talk of war between India and Pakistan and rebuked "those heartless people in both the countries who, unmindful of the dire consequences advocated this course as the only method of settling the issue." The Socialists believe that "a settlement is possible if not through negotiations then through arbitration". The Manifesto declared that "the two-nation theory as propounded by the Muslim League had been falsified by facts and repudiated by the actions if not

also by the professions of the League leaders". The Socialists did not recognise the tall presumption of the Congress leaders that "India is a secular democracy" because "it was growing into a revivalist Hindu State." They believe that "partition of India has made the division of the State on the same principles inevitable and only the freely expressed will of the people can decide where the several parts of the country should go". For this the manifesto demanded "the withdrawal of all non-State subject forces to the last man as the first pre-requisite." The manifesto declared that "both Governments on either side of the cease-fire line are unrepresentative" and demanded "the establishment of an all-parties Government as second pre-requisite for the holding of a free plebiscite". It demanded "fullest autonomy for Kashmir after accession to either India or Pakistan". "Our ideal is the establishment of a real social democracy in Kashmir," announced the Socialists. The manifesto ended with the following heart-lifting words:

> "The people of Kashmir should not feel discouraged due to the long delay in the settlement of the accession dispute. The past four years, though full of trials and tribulations, have not gone in vain. In 1947 very few people outside understood our problems. Indeed, a vast number held entirely wrong opinions about the whole affair. Today the world democracy is on our side and almost every one believes in the justice and righteousness of our cause. Having won on the moral plane we may be sure of our final success.
>
> People of Kashmir ! rejoice because the victory will be ours.
>
> Let the enemies of freedom tremble for the day of reckoning will come. "

Following the publication of the manifesto many books, brochures and pamphlets were issued by the Kashmir Democratic Union in quick succession in which the political, economic and social conditions in Kashmir under the Nationalists were described in detail with facts and figures. This voluminous literature was widely distributed in the State by the underground Socialist workers; it was also circulated in the subcontinent and sent abroad. It helped to maintain the high morale of Kashmiris. The rational approach of the Union to the Kashmir problem and the fact that this literature was being published from the headquarters of the Govern-

ment of India by Kashmiris who had been fighting for the freedom of the State from 1931 and some of whom were well-known outside Kashmir, forced unbiased and liberal-minded Indians to revise their opinion about the Nationalists and their claims.

Early in 1951 the Nationalists made an announcement that they would convene a constituent assembly with the aim of deciding the future of the State regarding certain vital matters including the accession issue. Yuvraj Karan Singh, the Regent, issued a proclamation on April 30, directing that "a constituent assembly consisting of the representatives of the people elected on the basis of adult franchise be constituted forthwith" for specified purposes. This was in flagrant violation of the international agreement embodied in the U.N.C.I.P. Resolutions of August 13, 1948 and January 5, 1949. The Kashmir Democratic Union issued a closely reasoned statement showing that under the prevailing conditions in the State the proposed constituent assembly would be a big farce. The concluding part of the statement declared:

> "If the Abdullah Government persist in carrying out their fraudulent scheme of the constituent assembly the Kashmir Democratic Union will advise all self-respecting and freedom-loving people of Kashmir to peacefully boycott the elections to the Assembly and to non-co-operate with the authorities in the State in this matter in every form and shape in order that the democratic world may fully understand the value it should attach to the assembly when and if it comes into existence".

But the puffed-up Nationalists would hear no arguments and would belittle all opposition. "The people of Kashmir have decided once for all to convene a constituent assembly to decide their future", thundered Abdullah in a gathering on July 6, on the occasion of *ID*. "Foreign observers friendly to Pakistan are helping her in her intransigent attitude. But neither the U.N. nor any other power can prevent Kashmiris from deciding their future in a democratic way". No choice was therefore left for the patriots but to advise the people to boycott the elections.

To make the move a success Sham Lal Yechha, general secretary of the Kashmir Democratic Union, proceeded to the

Valley to guide the workers on the spot. He reached Srinagar by the end of February. Noor Mohammed, general secretary of the Kashmir Socialist Party, and Mohammed Sikandar Malik, general secretary of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference, were already active, the former in Srinagar and the latter in Anantnag. The triumvirate zealously organised the public opinion for the boycott of the elections. For five months they worked night and day, the Nationalists totally ignorant of what they were about. By mid-summer it was clear that the people were determined to refuse to go to polls. Abdullah threatened them publicly that if necessary the Government would issue an ordinance making it incumbent upon every voter to cast his vote or be penalised. The Socialist leaders declared that come what may no Kashmiri was prepared to go to the polling booths. Scared by this challenge the Nationalist Government arrested all the three leaders in the month of July 1951. No warrants were served upon them; they were taken into custody by verbal orders of police officers.

These arrests did not much help the Nationalist Government. Other fighters for freedom came forward to preach the boycott of the elections. Pitambar Nath Dhar Fani went from Delhi to guide them. But he was taken into custody soon after arrival in Srinagar. Till the day of the poll in the month of October more than 1,000 workers were consigned to prison. Even then not a single voter appeared at the polling stations and all the 45 seats of the Constituent Assembly in the Kashmir Province were declared filled unopposed by the candidates of the National Conference. The extraordinary success of the boycott agitation was hailed as a great triumph for the resistance movement. The Constituent Assembly met for the first time in Srinagar at the close of October 1951. Ghulam Mohammed Sadiq was elected as its President.

The Socialist leaders were not set at liberty from detention even after the first session of the Constituent Assembly was held by the Nationalists. Noor Mohammed, P. N. Fani and Mohammed Sikandar were released in winter 1952, the first mentioned owing to serious ill health. The Kashmir Govern-

ment refused to set free Sham Lal Yechha though repeated demands were made for his release by the people. A *habeas corpus* application was presented to the Kashmir High Court stating that Yechha's detention was illegal and bad in law because no warrant of arrest was served on him at the time when he was taken into custody. The High Court kept the application pending for six months only to finally reject it. Yechha has now been behind the bars for more than thirty months.

After release Noor Mohammed started a weekly *Jamhoor* in summer 1952. From the start this journal demanded the withdrawal of outside forces from the State and holding of a free and impartial plebiscite under the auspices of the U.N. at an early date. How could the Nationalists bear it? An order was issued asking the editor to get every word precensored, which ultimately killed the journal like so many others before it.

The more the Nationalists resorted to repression and persecution the more the Indian imperialism became intransigent in the settlement of the accession dispute, the more did the resistance movement strengthen and captivate the hearts of the people. By 1952, barring the Nationalist gang, every Kashmiri whether he belonged to any political party or not became a resister in one way or the other and directly or indirectly contributed his mite to the movement. "If you go to Kashmir," stated Nehru in the Indian Parliament on July 24, 1952, "you will find normalcy and that the State is functioning adequately; but behind this normalcy is this constant tension because of the enemy trying to come in to create trouble and disturb." Who is this "enemy"? Not any outsider, but the victimised, suppressed and wronged people of Kashmir who cry for justice and fight for their freedom. If the schemes of political reform and the plans of economic advancement formulated by the Nationalists come to nothing, if the unlimited support of Nehru and his Government is mostly wasted in Kashmir the reason is that under the guidance of the fighters for freedom people are determined to defeat every move of the gangster regime.

THE HEROIC RESISTANCE

By the end of 1952 it was well-known that the political, economic and social conditions in Jammu and Kashmir had immensely deteriorated and the State's people were standing on the brink of ruin. A convention of all the progressive and liberal-minded workers of Kashmir was therefore called to fully and frankly discuss important problems that had arisen in connection with the latest developments in the public affairs in the State. The convention was held in Delhi on December 28 and 29, under the presidentship of Prem Nath Bazaz. It adopted seven resolutions.

In course of a lengthy resolution about the accession dispute the convention observed :

> "This convention of the progressive workers declares that the cup of the miseries of the State's people is full; the peaceful conditions in Kashmir claimed to have been restored by the Nationalist Government are illusory and deceptive and if some amicable settlement of the dipute satisfactory to the State people is not arrived at soon Kashmiris will lose all faith in the efficacy and potentiality of the Security Council and that condition of mind is bound to drive them to desperation. Mere passing of resolutions by the Council, when, as five years' bitter experience has shown, no drastic steps are taken to implement them, has ceased to be of any interest to the State people. Let it be known that on no account will the Kashmiris allow their homeland to remain in a condition of slavery ruthlessly ruled by the puppets of imperialism with backing of foreign bayonets; they are determined to decide their own fate and forge their own future freely and fearlessly and to attain their goal they are prepared to make any sacrifice however great.
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> This convention therefore warns the Security Council to shed complacency. The members of this convention are strongly of the opinion that the time has arrived when the Council should assert its position as an authoritative world organisation and justify its existence by firmly dealing with the parties to end the dispute. The convention demands that this purpose can be served only by ordering the withdrawal of all outside armies, by fixing a date for holding the impartial and free plebiscite and by directing Admiral Nimitz to take over charge of administration without any further delay."

The convention disapproved of the appointment of Yuvraj Karan Singh as Sadar-i-Riyasat because "one of the objectives of the Kashmir Freedom Movement from its very inception has been to end the autocratic Dogra rule in every shape and from" and "no patriotic Kashmiri could therefore approve of

the appointment of Yuvraj as Head of the State." It demanded from the Government of India the restoration of civil liberties in the State, inquiry into the rampant jobbery and nepotism of the Nationalists and cancellation of the permit system for ingress or egress from the State. The convention stated that the rule of the Nationalists had brought nothing but misery to the working classes and declared that "only the establishment of a democratic set-up in the State is the surest cure of these ills" and therefore "appealed to the State people to continue their struggle to achieve that end." In one resolution the convention sent heartiest greetings to "the fighters for freedom to whatever ideology, party, faith or class they belong". It advised the State people to stand united during these days of misfortune. "It is well to constantly bear this fact in mind that ultimately it will be through our own struggle and sacrifice that we shall have to liberate our motherland from the clutches of the enemies of freedom", it declared.

The historic decisions of the convention were printed in a booklet form entitled "*Suppressed Voice of Kashmir*" which was distributed in thousands. It perturbed the Nationalists. "There are elements in our country", said Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed, while addressing the Nationalist workers in Mujahid Manzil, "who call themselves leftists and progressives and spread disaffection against the Government. They are hungry for power and heap the shortcomings of the previous regimes on our heads". But the influence of the resistance movement widened day after day. "Our opponents are lying in wait on all sides", confessed Mohammed Sayid, general secretary of the National Conference, in an address to a workers rally on April 10. "They want to spread chaos by all means. There are some journals in the State which propagate their ideas and views and help them to spread disaffection."

Before his departure for London to participate in the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and to have talks with Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nehru paid a visit to Kashmir on May 23, 1953. Despite all precautions by the Nationalist

Government there were hostile demonstrations, waving of black flags, raising of cat-calls and slogans like 'Nehru go back' from the people when his officially-arranged procession passed through the streets. According to the Special Correspondent of the *Hindustan Times*, "on the eve of Mr. Nehru's arrival the city was plastered with hand-written posters by Muslims complaining of jobbery and nepotism".

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

PLIGHT OF MINORITIES

THE total population of the Jammu and Kashmir State, according to the census of 1941, was 40,21,616. The distribution of the population community-wise was as follows :

1.	Muslims	31,01,247
2.	Hindus	8,09,165
3.	Sikhs	65,603
4.	Buddhists	40,696
5.	Others	4,605

The Hindus may be further divided into Dogras, Harijans and Kashmiri Pandits. If the population is divided region-wise it was as follows :

1.	Jammu Province	...	19,81,433
2.	Kashmir Province	...	17,28,705
3.	Frontier Regions	...	3,11,478

Owing to the disturbed conditions and partition of the State by the cease-fire line no census could be taken in 1951. Presumably, though the population might have increased by a few lakhs during the last decade, the proportion of Muslims and non-Muslims has remained unaltered. There has, however, been some change in the location of the different communities since the day the subcontinent of India achieved independence. While prior to August 15, 1947, the members of all the communities and the followers of all the religions were found, more or less, in all the districts and regions of the State, now as a result of the communal riots and the holocaust of October-November 1947 and what followed, while the three districts of Jammu, Kathua and Udhampur bordering on the Indian Republic have become almost wholly non-Muslim in composition of their population, the areas known as Azad Kashmir are without any trace of Hindus and Sikhs. The only areas where mixed population of Muslims and non-Muslims is in evidence are the

Valley of Kashmir and the neighbouring districts of Rajouri and Doda. But here too it should be noted that the proportion of Muslims to non-Muslims is 15 : 1 which, however, was the case even before 1947.

Polarisation of populations has taken place in the frontier district of Ladakh as well; the Muslims have concentrated in its western part, the Tehsil of Kargil, which is bordering on Azad Kashmir and the Buddhists have gone over to the eastern side into the Tehsil of Leh which is adjacent to Tibet in the east and India on the south.

The large majority of the Hindu population of the State—nearly seven lakh in number—called Dogras, lives in the three districts of the Jammu province just mentioned. Among them are about two lakh Harijans (untouchables) and a few thousand Rajputs, the caste to which the royal family of the Maharaja belongs. In the Valley of Kashmir almost all Hindus are Brahmins well-known all over the world as Kashmiri Pandits. Their population is not more than 80 thousand. The Buddhists in Ladakh form also a minority comprising barely 50 thousand souls. The Sikhs are found in Jammu as well as in the Valley ; their population is nearly 60 thousand.

The present freedom struggle in Kashmir is quite old. It has been waged openly since 1931 with two-fold purpose. First, it aims at ending the alien Dogra rule in every shape and form and secondly, it works for the establishment of a democratic set-up in the country. Prior to 1931 the movement was conducted in a moderate way with less ambitious plans. The fighters for freedom then wanted more grants and facilities for spread of education and greater share in the governmental jobs for the sons of the soil. Therefore members of all communities, majority and minorities alike, participated in the struggle with equal vigour and zest. As a matter of fact Kashmiri Pandits who are very highly educated and politically more conscious than others, took a leading part for years in fighting for the rights of State subjects and for freedom of Press and some sort of representative government. The definition of State Subject, which opened avenues of government employment for Kashmiris and

banned the sale of land to outsiders, was settled and promulgated as a law (which is still in force) in 1927. It was the result of a tremendous agitation started and successfully carried to fruition by several patriotic Kashmiri Hindus. No doubt in the beginning Hindus, being educationally more advanced than the Muslims, derived greater benefit and advantage under the provisions of the law but ultimately the definition proved a boon for the members of the majority community.

In 1931 the State politics took a revolutionary turn ; the force of numbers began to be felt and the implications of democracy attracted attention. The freedom struggle no longer remained the debating affair of a few educated men in their chambers; it ceased to be a matter of statements and resolutions adopted by a selected few. Masses were suddenly awakened from deep slumber of ignorance and backwardness; and they took a glorious part in the movement. It was natural that in this elemental upsurge in a culturally backward country religion should play some role more so because the preponderating majority of the ruled was Muslim and the ruler a Hindu. Unfortunately the leaders of the movement were mostly young, inexperienced, immature and, worst of all, intellectually poor. They did not possess caution, balance, vision, foresight and liberal-mindedness—qualifications of a fighter for freedom—in great measure. They laid emphasis where it was least needed and overlooked the problems which ought to have been prominently brought to the fore. Some unfortunate incidents therefore took place during the grèat political upheaval in 1931 which could have possibly been avoided. The struggle for the liberation of four million dumb-driven people of the State took the shape of a sectarian agitation, a tussle between the Hindus and the Muslims which it never has been.

These incidents were enough to unnerve and unbalance the non-Muslims in general and Dogra Hindus in particular. Barring some honourable exceptions about whom we shall have to say something presently, the State Hindus of all classes ever since have played, in varying degrees, a reactionary role in Kashmir politics. Their one and the sole aim has been to

defend and strengthen the autocratic rule of the Dogras; they have set their faces against any political reforms; they have tried to discredit the Freedom Movement in every possible way and divide the fighters for freedom on religious, linguistic, sectarian or racial basis. Never as a community have Hindus in Kashmir during these past twenty-two years supported the people's movement for the democratisation of the Government. They have frequently exerted their utmost pressure on the side of die-hard conservatism and reaction. At times when the ruler has been forced to yield to any public demand Hindus have started mass movements of their own to thwart the intentions of the Maharaja. Such efforts of the minorities have often ultimately met with failure but they have never felt disheartened or discouraged and till this day they have played the role unflinchingly.

The attitude of the State Hindus towards the National Conference has been interesting as well as significant. The Nationalists under Abdullah have neither remained constant nor steady in their politics. In the beginning, more unconsciously than deliberately, they were driven, under pressure from below, to own a revolutionary role and espouse the Freedom Movement. They were therefore detested by the non-Muslims. No Hindu or Sikh would join hands with them. It is true that the name of the party fighting for freedom then was Muslim Conference and no non-Muslim could be its member; but it was not so much the name that frightened the Hindus as its revolutionary programme that made them shiver. So when the Muslim Conference was converted into the National Conference in June 1939, and its doors thrown open to non-Muslims, very few Hindus and Sikhs joined the party because there was no guarantee that the party had forsaken revolutionary outlook and radical politics.

In 1940 a very unhappy development took place in the affairs of the National Conference. Abdullah perhaps thoughtlessly in the beginning but surely without consulting most of his important colleagues, threw in his lot with Nehru and unconstitutionally committed the party to the support of the

Congress. As we shall see he grasped the grave implications of this step only in 1953.

State Hindus supported Abdullah during the last thirteen years whenever he held aloft the banner of the Congress or whenever he strengthened the tottering Dogra rule by his voice and deeds. It was but natural that soon after the promulgation of the Mountbatten Plan when the future of the Maharaja became quite uncertain and dark, the Hindus should acclaim Abdullah as their saviour because he sided with the Congress and India to defend the Dogra Raj. Only one year earlier in 1946 they had vigorously denounced him as public enemy No. 1 for his "Quit Kashmir" agitation in which he raised the slogan to end the century-old Dogra monarchy and asked the Maharaja to leave the Valley for good.

As a whole therefore non-Muslims have not played a creditable part in the Freedom Movement of Kashmir. There might be ample justification for their adopting this attitude. The arguments usually advanced by the apologists of the Muslim League politics in India during pre-Independence days can be restated with more plausibility in the case of State Hindus since, in Kashmir, the ruler belonged to the same religion as the Hindu minority. A similar attitude of the Hyderabad Muslims can also be mentioned in further support of the argument. But one wrong cannot justify another and it is an undeniable fact that the Hindus can by no means feel proud of their achievements in the realm of State politics during the past two decades.

It would, however, be wrong to conclude that all the non-Muslim minorities behaved equally narrow-mindedly or unpatriotically. The opposition of the different sections was marked by vast difference in degrees. The Kashmiri Pandits were, for instance, not so vehement, insistent or strident in their hostility as were the Dogras of Jammu. There were several reasons for this. First, the ruling dynasty belonged to the Dogra Hindus and almost every Dogra used to feel that he had some share, substantial or sentimental, in the administration. Linguistically, geographically and historically Dogras are entirely different from Kashmiri Pandits. The latter are nearer to the

Kashmiri Muslims than to the former. Only religion (which should not be confused with culture) differs, all other things being the same. Secondly, Pandits are much more advanced, educationally and politically, than the Dogras ; therefore the former could not entirely forget or ignore the lessons of world history or trends in modern political thought. While critically appreciating the Freedom Movement in their own homeland Pandits did not keep themselves totally aloof from it. As a class they were less hostile than the Dogras towards the aspirations of the Muslim fighters for freedom. Indeed, a number of Pandit young men openly joined the struggle as far back as 1932.

Some other sections among the non-Muslims such as Harijans and Sikhs have also produced patriots, however limited in number, who have worked shoulder to shoulder with the Muslim fighters for freedom since 1938 or a little earlier.

The trials and tribulations of the non-Muslim fighters for freedom have been greater than those faced by their Muslim colleagues. For, the former had not only to bear the governmental repression, which in their case was more ferocious, they had also to suffer the ostracism and persecution at the hands of their own co-religionists. Muslim leaders and workers were getting encouragement, honour and assistance from members of their own community but with the Hindu fighters the case has been entirely different. Owing to the hostile attitude of the Hindus as a class towards the Freedom Movement the latter used to come under fire equally from the authorities as well as the members of their own community. It needed iron nerves and deep-rooted conviction in a Hindu to demand the end of Dogra autocracy in the State, to fight for equal rights of all people without consideration of religion and to struggle for civil liberties and the establishment of a democratic form of government. Every political reform, however insignificant or unimportant, was considered a great blow by the State Hindus who stubbornly resisted until they were convinced that it had come to stay. If a Muslim demanding any change in the prevailing political set-up was declared by them a rebel

and enemy of the country, a Hindu supporting such a demand was logically a traitor, a stigma on the fair name of the community and one deserving the direst punishment.

It was as a result of the selfless, sincere and pioneer work of a few non-Muslims for many years previous to 1939 that the Muslim leaders, including Abdullah and Abbas, were prevailed upon to voluntarily convert the Muslim Conference into National Conference in June that year. This re-orientation of the Kashmir politics did not produce any change in the mentality of the Hindus; because substantially the new Nationalist body remained basically the same as the old Muslim Conference—a revolutionary organisation to end the existing unjust order and to usher in a new free society. But when Abdullah's hunger for power and fame had better of him and he went into the lap of Nehru to get these, some more Kashmiri non-Muslims joined the party. But the majority of Hindus and Sikhs still suspected the Nationalists. Nevertheless the more the National Conference came under the influence of the Conrgess the larger became the number of its Hindu supporters but, of course, its Muslim following increasingly dwindled. Incredible as it might appear the Nationalist movement by identifying itself with the Congress ideology, had to shed all its revolutionary spirit and fervour ; it could no longer sincerely and vigorously work for the annihilation of Hindu monarchy or for the establishment of a true democratic government which, in the eyes of Hindu India, would be, in the last analysis, nothing but a Muslim rule in the State. National Conference ceased to be what it was meant to be. It was reduced to a corpse though its leaders still asserted that they continued to work for a "New and Free Kashmir". All revolutionaries therefore gradually abandoned it and along with them those fewHindus also who had joined Abdullah in 1932 to fight for the freedom of the Valley.

Abdullah, however, was happy to have more and more Hindus in his fold. He wanted quantity and had scant regard for the quality of his co-workers. He reached the limit of his joy when in 1947 he was installed in power by the Maharaja with the backing of the Congress and the unanimous wish of

the reactionary State Hindus. By then he had forfeited all good will of the Kashmir masses. The recognition of his leadership by Hindus came only when he invited the Indian armies to occupy Kashmir in order to defend the Dogra Raj against the onslaughts of Kashmir Democracy no less than the assault of the tribesmen.

But the Nationalists in power became as much anathema to the Hindus as to the Muslims. Perhaps more so. Despite their specious slogans and attractive declarations the performances of the Nationalists were entirely different from their professions. Like their Muslim countrymen the Hindus were disillusioned and started their opposition to the Nationalist Government.

Kashmiri Pandits

It is true that the Kashmiri Pandits are educated, politically conscious and intelligent but it was not difficult for them to understand that they could do nothing more than approach the Congress leaders in India and persuade them to set the matters right. But though Nehru is also a Kashmiri Pandit by descent he would not hear any complaint against the Kashmir Nationalists, particularly against Abdullah. Knowing the weakness of his case Nehru dared not incur the displeasure of the Nationalists while doing justice to the Hindus. With this attitude of the Prime Minister of India other Congress leaders, not surprisingly, either turned a deaf ear towards the Kashmiri Pandits or counselled patience. State Hindus were assured that with passage of time conditions in the State would return to normal and with the fatherly care of the Central Government their future as part of Hindu India could not be hopeless. Indeed, they were told, as soon as the disturbed days would be over, State Hindus particularly the highly educated Kashmiri Pandits would fare far better than they did even under the Dogra Raj. That appeared plausible. But the question was how long would the abnormal conditions continue? If it would mean only weeks or months the Kashmir Hindus were prepared to wait and patiently bear all the hardships and make any sacrifices which they were called upon to give. But weeks

passed into months and months rolled into years, yet no end of the abnormal days seemed near. As a matter of fact time only made things worse in every respect. Conditions deteriorated, politically, economically, psychologically and socially. Worst of all, insecurity and uncertainty became an unforgettable part of a citizen's life in the State. Anyone who has been a member of a minority community in any province in the subcontinent of India on the eve of partition can understand what it means to live under such conditions. It makes life simply unbearable.

Kashmiri Pandits are as a community an intellectual class in the State. For centuries, may be thousands of years, they have led the Kashmir masses in education and culture. By dint of efficiency, loyalty and diligence they have manned the administrative machinery of the State under the successive rules of Buddhists, Shah Miri Muslims, Mughals, Pathans, Sikhs and Dogras. Government employment has been the main source of livelihood for them. But now for the first time under the secularist regime of the Nationalists, the avenues of employment were restricted for them. Kashmiri Pandits even when better qualified for jobs than the Muslims related to or acquainted with the Nationalist leaders were rejected and the latter preferred; many Pandits already in service were superseded by their subordinates far junior to them in class and grade and inferior to them in academic qualifications. It becomes very poignant for a Pandit official to work under an inefficient, less qualified, uninformed and inexperienced erstwhile subordinate who is promoted to a responsible job only because he is a Muslim favoured by the Nationalists. In many cases employees twenty or thirty steps below have been pushed to the top, over the heads of those above them.

This jobbery and favouritism is not confined to the sphere of government services. It is rampant everywhere. Government contracts in Public Works, Forests, Revenue and other departments are also given to their own men by the Nationalists. Relatives and friends of Ministers get the lion's share. The dealers appointed by the Government to sell controlled commo-

dities were favourites of the ruling clique. This too adversely affected the economic condition of the Kashmiri Pandits.

The agrarian reforms and the way they have been implemented by the Abdullah Government have hit the Kashmiri Pandits hard. More than thirty per cent of the lands in the Valley belonged to this community. An insignificant fraction of the lands was bestowed upon the community as *jagirs* by the past rulers for their loyal services. Most of the land in their possession was secured by Pandits at the time of the first settlement of the land seven decades ago when not many people were coming forward to take the responsibility of developing the uncultivated pasture lands of the Valley. Ownership of land under Pathans, Sikhs and early Dogras was considered a great liability and only adventurous and industrious people with some capital to invest could have land as a business proposition. A large slice of the land in possession of Pandits was purchased by them after 1934 when proprietary rights were granted to Kashmiris. Before that year the Maharaja was recognised, in law, as the sole proprietor of land in the Valley. Pandits purchased agricultural land with their hard-earned money in the hope that it would yield good return to maintain them. When therefore the agrarian reforms were introduced thousands of Kashmiri Pandits whose only source of income was land were thrown on the streets.

With doors of government services virtually slammed against them ; with government contracts almost totally denied to them ; with trade and commerce in a chaotic condition in the State ; with land taken away from them ; and, above all, with the insecurity and uncertainty all-round in their homeland, if Kashmiri Pandits found the demons of starvation and destitution staring them in their face there is no wonder in it. Realising that there could be no end to the abnormal conditions so long as the dispute over the accession issue between India and Pakistan continued many Kashmiri Pandits decided to leave their motherland for good. But the Nationalist Government disliked the exodus. For, the Pandits who left the State became living vehicles of propaganda against the Nationa-

lists in India because wherever an educated Pandit went he carried the tale of atrocities and mis-government in Kashmir. The Nationalists approached the Government of India and immediately the ever-obliging Nehru issued instructions that no Kashmiri should be taken in government service anywhere in India. Simultaneously the Kashmir Government introduced a permit system for those who wanted to leave the State. This had a parallel in Kashmir history, when in the fourteenth century Sikandar Butshikan treated Pandits exactly similarly by cruelly torturing them inside the Valley and refusing them permission to proceed beyond the borders. Ultimately Sardar Patel got the order amended and Pandits can join and have joined government services in India. What a wrench it must be to a Pandit to bid good-bye to his country of birth it is not difficult to imagine.

Thousands of Pandits, men, women and children, have settled in different parts of India. "The Kashmiri Pandit," reported the Special Correspondent of *Hindustan Times* in June 1953, "who is so close to the Kashmiri Muslim personally, politically and culturally, although he has not run amuck like his co-religionist in Jammu, is equally panic-stricken. It is no mere accident that some 8000 Pandits have migrated to India since the inception of the new order". I have lived in India in exile for more than three years. It is poignant to watch how terribly these displaced Pandits particularly their handsome but delicate women folk have suffered in health owing to ill-nourishment, poverty and inclement climate. I am also constantly reminded of the thousands of my Muslim compatriots who live under similar circumstances in Pakistan. I am sure most of these Kashmiris will die prematurely. How longingly they look back to the days when they lived comparatively frugal, contented and happy lives in their peaceful homes and how they pine to return to their benevolent motherland where, says Kalhana, "realising that the land created by his father is unable to bear the heat the hot-rayed sun honours it by bearing himself with softness in summer".

From their bitter experience of the Nationalist politics

during the last two decades particularly since October 1947, the Kashmiri Pandits consider it risky and dangerous to remain in the Valley in the present circumstances.

Throughout the long course of the Kashmir history Brahmins have played leading roles from time to time in the cultural as well as the political spheres. But they have never been unitedly on one side. While some of them have prominently figured as standard-bearers of revolution, freedom and progress others have sided with obscurantism, reaction and tyranny. Kashmir Brahmins have been the learned exponents of Buddhist Philosophy, the ardent propounders of *Trika Shastra*, the staunchest propagandists of the Hindu-Muslim Culture. They have valiantly fought against the despotism of the Hindu monarchs, the fanaticism of the Muslim rulers, the barbarism of the Pathans and the savagery of the Sikhs. "The most respectable class in this country is that of Brahmins", stated Abul Fazal, the learned Minister and chronicler of Akbar nearly four centuries ago. "They do not loosen the tongue of calumny against those not of their faith, nor beg nor importune. They employ themselves in planting fruit trees and are generally a source of benefit to the people". But many among the Brahmins have also firmly stood against social and cultural progress. They were the main prop of kings like Mihirgula "the killer of three crores" and even the ferocious bigot, Sikandar Butshikan, had Suhabhatta, the unscrupulous Brahmin convert, as his chief executive to carry out his atrocious plans. Whenever a cruel ruler of Kashmir needed an adviser to implement his wicked schemes he did not find any dearth of Brahmins to assist him.

Kashmiri Pandits of the twentieth century have fully inherited these traditions from their illustrious ancestors. Today men of both the ideologies are present among them. There are Pandits who passionately fight for the freedom of Kashmir, have immensely suffered for doing so and are prepared to lay down their lives for the cause, irrespective of the fact that the preponderating majority of their compatriots now are the followers of Islam. It is they who cherish the enduring,

abiding and perennial human values which have come down to us from generation to generation and which have made Kashmir really great. It is they who are keeping the torch of noble Kashmir culture ablaze. There are other Pandits who are arrayed on the side of despotism, reaction and slavery trying to put the hands of the clock of progress back. If history is any guide there can be no doubt that ultimately it will be the progressives who will win and usher in a new era of prosperity in the Valley.

Gifted as they are with modern scientific education, ability to organise, experience to administer, efficiency to teach, capability to manage and above all with infinite patience, keen intelligence and calm resistance, Pandits can be the best asset in the building of a new and free social order in the Valley. They are fully equipped to be in the vanguard of the revolutionary forces. They have therefore nothing to fear from democracy. The Pandit members of the Socialist Party have fully realised this. But others are hesitant and suspicious, possibly not without some justification. But to such among them who love Kashmir and want to live in this ancient homeland as honoured and free citizens the right course would be that they should eschew the prejudices and the narrow communalism in their own hearts and become champions of the toiler's cause. Muslim majority will then cease to be a bugbear and a bogey to them.

We are living during the times when an age is coming to a close, when feudalism in Asia is fast dying and modernism taking its place. We must rise to the occasion and accept the coming order which is only the next higher stage in our own culture. In doing so we shall have to tear a leaf from our own history and follow in the footsteps of our great and enlightened ancestors like Lal Ded. Every Kashmiri Pandit has to make a choice between the rising new order and the decaying old society. No power can stem the onrushing tide of modernism and democracy just as no one could successfully stand against the spread of Islam in the fourteenth-century Kashmir. The wise way is to integrate the new with our life in such a manner as to make it an organic part of our being.

That way we shall rejuvenate ourselves. We shall rise with a new life from the ashes of the old. But if unfortunately we fail to do so we are bound to clash with the mighty social forces which have generated during the last two decades in the Valley and then nothing but destruction will be our lot.

It is heartening that a few Kashmiri Pandit public workers, members of the Kashmir Socialist Party and the Kisan Mazdoor Conference, have fully grasped the basic, essential and fundamental points of the Kashmir problem and have been sensibly conducting their activities. But it must be frankly recognised that the majority of the Pandits have kept themselves aloof and refuse to follow the democratic path. The time has come when the whole problem should be dispassionately and objectively reconsidered by Pandits in view of the wide experiences of the past years and the recent developments.

The uncertainty and the insecurity born of the unsettled accession issue has affected much more the Kashmiri Pandits than any other class of people in the State. It has weakened them in every respect, politically, economically, socially and intellectually. What is worse, it has demoralised them. It is time that they realise the stern reality that if the dispute is not settled amicably and peacefully between India and Pakistan the internal conditions in the State can in no way improve; indeed, they will deteriorate and some day unawares something might happen which will jeopardise the life of the community. It is therefore wise and sagacious to take the time by the forelock and prepare the community, psychologically and otherwise, for the inevitable.

The Pandit members of the two progressive political parties have rendered yeoman's service to the community by having maintained balance all these critical years in the history of Kashmir. Undaunted by the sufferings and hardships that all men have to face for a big and noble cause they have successfully braved the ordeal so far. Very few in Kashmir have stood so unswervingly and steadfastly by the side of democracy. Today it is not possible to evaluate the services that these brave sons have rendered to the country. Time alone will show

that their humble, unselfish and sincere efforts in the cause of freedom and democracy, unrecognised at present, have become a seed for a big tree under the shade of which countless future generations of the Kashmir people, Hindus and Muslims alike, will take shelter and flourish. It is these efforts which will lay the foundation stone of secularism and human culture in the Valley; it is these efforts which will make Kashmir a bridge between India and Pakistan; it is these efforts which will enable Pandits to live in Kashmir like free, respectable and equal citizens of the State. Time will come when on the basis of these heroic though small endeavours Kashmiri Pandits will hold their heads high and declare, with pardonable pride, that when Kashmir fought for freedom Pandits did not lag behind; they were also among the vanguard of the fighters.

Harijans.

It is well-known that Harijans are the most tyrannised people. Soon after the Nationalists were installed in power by the Maharaja, Abdullah in his usual demagogic manner, declared as head of the Emergency Administration, that the Nationalist Government "would help the Harijans by granting them double the concessions and rights enjoyed by them till then" and that he was desirous of seeing the day when "one of the Harijans would be the Prime Minister of the State". But in actual practice the Nationalist Government deprived this downtrodden community of even the small mercies that were shown to them by the previous regimes in the shape of scholarships to students in schools or some unspecified preference in recruitment to government services. The result has been that while in 1947 there were fifteen Harijan students reading in the Government College at Jammu, the number had come down to four in 1952. Recruitment of Harijans in government services has practically stopped. "The plight of the Scheduled Caste people is pitiable," observed P. N. Rajbhoj, General Secretary of All India Scheduled Castes Federation, on his return from a fact-finding tour of Jammu and Kashmir in March 1953. "Kashmir has denied them all the rights and privileges which are granted to them by the Indian Constitution. They are not given any

representation in the Cabinet nor any seats reserved for them in Parliament and State Legislature. In the services they are treated at par with other classes. Even in the educational field no special privileges are given to them".

A Nationalist Harijan, Nahar Singh, member of the Constituent Assembly, moved a resolution in the House demanding that "in order that the backward Harijans of the State might be brought up to the level of other advanced communities the facilities granted to the Harijans in India in the matter of scholarships and recruitment to services may also be granted to them here". While moving the resolution Nahar Singh narrated the pitiable conditions of the State Harijans and reminded Abdullah of his assurances and promises at the time of his assuming charge as head of the administration. The Nationalist Harijan expected to receive bountiful sympathy and some substantial help. But what did he get ? One after the other Muslim Nationalist members of the House opposed his suggestion and dubbed him as a communalist and a reactionary merely for stating that Harijans were backward and therefore deserved special encouragement and some facilities for advancement. Of all the speeches Abdullah's was the most significant; it was an eye-opener. According to the report of his speech as published in the *Khidmat* at the very outset he announced that "it was not necessary that the State should follow the Constitution of India or the policy pursued by the Indian Government" meaning thereby that if any facilities are granted to Harijans in India it is not necessary that the State also should grant the same to them. Referring to the grant of scholarships to Harijans by previous regimes Abdullah argued:

> "It is said that economic condition of the Harijans is not good and so they cannot get their children educated; therefore they demand some scholarships. If the grant of scholarships on the basis of poverty is conceded where will it end.........because wherever you go in the State you will find only poor people everywhere.........If the previous Government granted a few scholarships to Harijans it was also exploiting lakhs of them".

Admonishing the Harijans for their own negligence in the matter of education Abdullah observed :

> "It is said that in 1947 there were fifteen Harijans in the Jammu College but now there are only four. In this the Government is not to blame in any way. This is the result of the negligence of the Harijans themselves. They should devote their attention towards education."

Utilising the handy slogan of "secularism in danger" to shout down minority members Abdullah advised the Harijans in his speech by saying :

> "I want to tell the Harijan members of this House that they should not raise their voice only for Harijans; they should represent the whole nation. They should not confine themselves to one community. By doing so they will lose the sympathies of other communities."

In the case of government services we have seen that inefficient, unqualified and junior Muslim relatives or partymen of the Nationalists have been unduly promoted to higher ranks; in direct recruitment they are given preference over non-Muslims in all departments. Similar is the case while granting scholarships, government contracts and other official privileges. No bogey of communalism haunts the brain of the Nationalists when it is the case of their own men. But when the case of Harijans comes up for consideration the principles of secularism in the abstract must be thoroughly weighed and paraded so as to deprive the poor members of the minority of all facilities and amenities that may be essential for their progress. No wonder the poor Nationalist Harijan, Nahar Singh, had to bitterly express himself, after hearing the admonitions and sane advices thus :

> "Harijans are followers of the National Conference and we want to end communalism. But if to raise a voice to describe the poverty of a backward community is communalism then Gandhi and Nehru also should be called communalists."

Buddhists.

Of all the people in the State the Buddhists are the most backward. Prior to 1947 they had no active political organisation to represent their cause. The Maharaja's Government used to nominate two members from them for the Praja Sabha (State Legislature). In their own interests the Kashmir Nationalists created a few leaders among the Buddhists to lead them.

One of these is Kushok Bakula, Head Lama of Siptuk Monastery. Kushok Bakula and his activities have received wide publicity in the State and outside in the Indian Press because he has joined the National Conference and supports State's accession to India. For five years it was given out that the Buddhists are highly pleased with the Nationalist rule. Leh is not an easily accessible place. Therefore the story of the developments in the Lama country was not heard. Suddenly, however, the lid was lifted early in 1952 by Kushok Bakula himself who revealed the truth. Either finding it impossible to suppress the feelings of the Buddhists towards the Nationalist rulers or heartened by the successful anti-Abdullah policy of the State Hindus, Kushok Bakula presented early in 1952 on behalf of the people of Ladakh, a meaningful memorandum to the Kashmir Premier in the course of which he made a demand for "a statutory provision in the future constitution of Jammu and Kashmir under which the province of Ladakh would become a federating unit of Kashmir as long as the accession of the State to India endures".

In the memorandum Kaushok Bakula, who is a member of the Nationalist Constituent Assembly, urged that a separate Legislative Assembly of fifteen members, with an Executive Council responsible to it, should be set up for Ladakh to run the "internal administration" of the area. Under this proposal, "Ladakh would largely bear the same relations to Jammu and Kashmir State as the latter does to India with the local Legislature as the only authority competent to make laws for the province and to control its administration". Asserting that under the present circumstances Ladakh would have little or no voice in the State's seventy-five-member Constituent Assembly, where "we are in point of race, language and culture perfect strangers to the rest of the members", the Head Lama claimed that his plan is "the best guarantee of the stability of the connections of Ladakh with Kashmir". Kushok Bakula however, pointed out that "if his plan was not considered feasible just now, a statutory advisory committee of fifteen members elected on a joint electorate basis should be set up

for Ladakh and no measure affecting the economic, political and religious life of the province should be passed by the State Constituent Assembly or the Jammu and Kashmir Government without its approval. All proposals emanating from the statutory advisory committee should be treated as the voice of Ladakhis." The Head Lama also demanded the appointment of a Buddhist as a member of the State Cabinet.

The memorandum betrayed complete lack of trust in the Nationalists. It strengthened the arguments of the opponents of the Nationalists against the administration and showed that no minority in any part of the State was pleased with the doings of the Government. Kushok Bakula also is not sure that Kashmir can remain permanently with India and if it does he was anxious that his community should be saved from the tyranny and injustice of the Nationalists.

Probably in order to explain further why the Buddhists of Ladakh are so deeply anxious to secure autonomy for their home district Kushok Bakula delivered a speech in the State Legislature on May 12, 1952, throwing further light on this topic. The Head Lama said:

> "The Budget presented to the Assembly by the Finance Minister of the Nationalist Government did not provide a penny for the betterment of Ladakh which is apparently being held as part of the State merely for the satisfaction of its being *a conquered territory.*"

According to the report of the speech as published in the Press Kushok Bakula said that after reading the Budget statement from one end to the other one could not find mention of Ladakh anywhere so far as expansion of primary education, restoration of frontier and other scholarships, preparation of text-books in Bodhi language and introduction of mother tongue as the medium of instruction were concerned. He complained that no provision whatever had been made for the rehabilitation of refugees of Zanskar who are still wandering as homeless beggars in Kulu Valley and dozens of whom have perished in their wanderings. Nor had any provision been made to repair the damage wrought on *gompas* of Zanskar during the disturbances of 1947-48. "The Buddhists of Ladakh", complained Kushok Bakula, "had no

representative either in the Indian Parliament or in the Kashmir Cabinet. Both are for them forbidden ground". Like all other non-Muslim minorities in the State the Buddhists have been patiently enduring injustices and hardships in the hope that some day they would get a square deal under the secular regime of the Nationalists. But this hope has not materialised. "Till now people of Ladakh have been feeling the weight of their shackles but suppressed their groans", said the Head Lama. "It would, however, be too much to expect at this juncture of the world history when the spirit of independence and the principle of self-determination are pervading and permeating all places and when Kashmir is pulsating with new life and New China is our close neighbour that Ladakh would remain unaffected and continue to be dumb as before".

As stated earlier Ladakh on India side, of the cease-fire line is divided into two parts, (1) Leh and (2) Kargil. According to the 1941 Census the population figures for the areas are :

	Muslims	Buddhists
Leh	4146	31866
Kargil	35711	8292

When Kushok Bakula demands full autonomy for Ladakh he is not supported by the leaders of Kargil who are Muslims. The latter prefer in the present conditions to be ruled by Srinagar and fiercely oppose the Buddhist monk. But the protestations of these Ladakhi Muslims are never heard outside the State. There is an enclave called Zanskar in the Kargil Tehsil inhabited by Buddhists. At a meeting held in Leh in September 1951 the general committee of the Leh Tehsil National Conference under the presidentship of Kushok Bakula adopted a resolution demanding that Zanskar area be transferred to Leh Tehsil as the "people of this area are homogeneous with the population of the latter Tehsil". Yet Bakula like all Hindus claims to be the true Nationalist while he dubs the Kargil Muslims as narrow-minded communalists. The resolution is a sad commentary on the working of Gandhian secularism in the frontier *illaqa*.

There is no section of the non-Muslim minorities in Kash-

mir which has any confidence in the Nationalist Government. Allured by the specious slogans and altruistic professions of the Nationalists in 1947 Hindus and Sikhs paid glowing tributes to the National Conference. The Nationalist leaders were compared with saints. Shiv Narain Fotedar, a weather-cock politician of shallow views and leader of reactionary Kashmiri Pandits went even to the extent of declaring in a public meeting in Jammu in November 1947 that Abdullah was an incarnation of Lord Krishna. He quoted a famous *sloka* of Bhagwat Geeta to prove his contention. That was the utmost limit of degradation. However, that uncritical phase has passed away. Those very Hindu leaders who were singing songs in praise of the Nationalists are now unsparingly condemning them.

After what has taken place in all parts of the subcontinent since August 1947, no State Hindu with an iota of common sense and intelligence believes that the privileges and the vested interests enjoyed by upper classes among the Hindus in Jammu and Kashmir State can be retained by them any more whether Kashmir remains with India or goes to Pakistan. It is not the destruction of these special interests that has made them sullen; it is the high handedness, undependability and absence of any decency and gentlemanliness in their dealings by the Nationalist leaders and workers that has made non-Muslims apprehensive about their future. One can live in present-day Kashmir not as a matter of one's birth right and under the shelter of some recognised law and order but as one at the mercy of the Nationalists. The Nationalists think that Hindus live in Kashmir because they have magnanimously allowed them to exist; otherwise they could have been pushed out if not liquidated by Pakistan. No self-respecting Hindu can bear to drag his existence under such humiliating circumstances in the State.

Had the Nationalists been genuine secularists and humanists there would be no occasion for Hindus to feel bitter or panicky. No man wants to leave his native place unless very adverse conditions force him to do so. If thousands of Kashmiri Pandits have left the Valley and settled in the plains during the past six years bearing the scorching heat in

uncongenial surroundings there must be solid reasons for their doing so. "The Kashmiri is so deeply attached to his native land that the idea of emigration is, to him, insupportable", says Baron Schonberg in his *Travels*. "Many efforts have been made to induce them to form colonies away from the Valley in which they were born; but rather than break that mysterious tie, that filial bond which binds them to fatherland, they endure oppression and injustice; they toil and are unrepaid; but they still behold the blue sky reflected in their own unruffled lake; they inhale the balmy air, cooled and purified in its passage over the snow topped mountains... Their oppression (they know) cannot deprive them of these enjoyments and they live on, slaves in their native land". Kashmiri Pandits are known for the adjustibility and elasticity they possess in their character. They have struck to their place of birth even during the days when certain fanatic Muslims ruled the Valley. The Nationalist Government must be something worse in its nature so as to make it impossible for them to continue to live in their land of birth.

Generally speaking State Hindus do not deeply ponder over the problem that faces them. To them there appears no solution to it. They neither like Pakistan nor the Nationalist Government. As reactionaries they think that strong Government alone is the remedy. They should have felt immensely pleased and satisfied had the Government of India after stationing forces in the State appointed a powerful military or civil governor to administer law and order in the country. Perhaps that might have been an improvement on the present position in certain respects. But it is forgotten that the basic difficulty could not have been solved by such a method. So far as the accession of the State is concerned nothing less than joining with Pakistan can pacify the Muslims. If Abdullah, despite his past achievements and the appeasement policy which he pursued, could not bring the State Muslims towards himself in this respect how can an all-powerful administrator appointed by the Government of India do so? Surely the appointment of the administrator cannot make the accession issue

non-existent. It would still be there with more or less the same results. Surely it would make the situation more explosive and dangerous. Unless the accession issue is solved to the entire satisfaction of the Kashmir people no administration can be stable or prove successful. From experience of the last six years the non-Muslim minorities have realised that the present conditions of uncertainty about the future have harmed them more than the Muslims. But unhappily they have not yet learnt another lesson that powerful public sentiments and opinions cannot be suppressed by strong governments and bullets. In their own interests therefore the State Hindus should vigorously demand that the dispute be settled immediately in a democratic way allowing all sections and classes of people to enjoy the right of self-determination to the fullest. Thus alone can the miseries of the Hindus as well as the Muslims that they have been enduring since October 1947 come to an end.

The future of the State Hindus can be safe and hopeful only if they abandon their present attitude of reliance on the military might of India and begin to have faith in the good-will and large-heartedness of the Muslim majority. Until and unless Hindus can imbibe an undying faith in democracy they can have no future in Kashmir.

It is not the boosted Muslim leaders who can prove of any value in the days to come. Indian armies cannot remain in the occupation of the State for ever. Sooner or later these armies shall have to vacate the Valley and leave the people to decide their own fate and future. What will the State Hindus do then ? Let them take a lesson from the history of Europeans domiciled in India or the Anglo-Indian community. For decades these people wrongly believed that the British rulers would always remain in India to look after them and the day of Independence of the subcontinent wlould never come. But when suddenly in 1947 the British left the country both these communities were taken by utter surprise. It is becoming very difficult for them to revive from the effects of the great change. State Hindus can avoid that fate overtaking them.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

CLASH WITH DOGRA HINDUS

HINDUS in India whether they belong to communalist, nationalist, socialist or communist ideology almost like the proverbial one man demand that Kashmir should remain with India. To be sure there are a few honourable exceptions here and there who have occasionally raised their voice in support of Kashmir democracy and criticised the policy of the Government of India in this behalf. Soon after the occupation of the State by the Indian Forces the Central Political Council of the, now defunct, Radical Democratic Party of India, adopted a resolution, in December 1947, stressing that Kashmir can only accede to Pakistan because of geographical contiguity, administrative convenience and the manifest inclination of the State people. The Council declared the policy of the Indian Government as harmful and dangerous. "By no stretch of imagination can it be said", writes A.M. Dharma Lingam, a Hindu publicist, in his book *Blasted hopes of Democracy in India*, "that the Srinagar Valley and the districts to the west and south of it are geographically, religiously, commercially or linguistically connected to India". He adds: "India behaved from the day of partition as though she wanted Kashmir and looked to the Maharaja to propose accesion to India, a thoroughly wrong approach. The Congress attitude to Kashmir since 3rd June 1947 is a mistake and no useful purpose will be served by hiding the fact". Similar views have no doubt been expressed by some other politicians and statesmen in India but their number is not large. On the whole Hindus and Sikhs continue to vigorously demand that the hold on Kashmir should be tightened and the prized possession in no case be given up. They are however divided on the method of maintaining the grip on the precious spoil which the superiority of India in military might over Pakistan has brought to them.

While the moderates under the leadership of Nehru, the powerful Prime Minister, think that it is necessary that the conquered Kashmiri Muslims should be weaned away from the Pakistan ideology by generous treatment and grant of widest possible autonomy in the internal administration of their country, at any rate during the transition period, the extremists (till recently under the guidance of redoubtable S.P. Mookerjee) believe that this policy of appeasement cannot successfully persuade the Kashmir Muslims to become loyal citizens of India. The only way therefore to keep the State as an integral part of India is to establish a strong Government there with or without the consent of the local Muslims. "If the Muslims of Kashmir do not want to remain with us", frankly declared Mookerjee at a public meeting in Patiala on April 20, 1953, "let them go away but Kashmir must and will be ours. This is a vital matter for the security of India".

In one thing both the moderates and the extremists are in entire agreement. They think that those people in the State who demand Kashmir's accession to Pakistan and denounce or even criticise the present position must be suppressed and no reports about the resistance and the Freedom Movement in the Valley should be published in the Press. This is the common meeting ground for all political parties in this country which has adopted "the most democratic constitution in the world". None of them has ever raised any objection to granting the Nationalist Government fullest powers to suppress and oppress pro-Pakistan and freedom-loving elements in the Valley.

In 1947 the Nationalists were led to believe that Pakistan could not exist for more than a few weeks. That was what many of the Indian politicians were foretelling. On that hope the Nationalists had enthusiastically acceded to India. But the prophecy did not come true. Had Pakistan disappeared, short-visioned people believe, many problems that face the Kashmir Nationalists and the Hindus at present would have never arisen. So long as the Islamic State is in existence it is futile to hope that the State Muslims will voluntarily ever agree to remain with India. That grim reality has made both the

Muslim Nationalists and Hindus of Kashmir to think furiously and make changes in their attitude to politics from time to time.

The U.N. Commission for India and Pakistan was successful, after prolonged mediation between the two countries, to get a cease-fire effected in Kashmir in the beginning of 1949. The international agreement embodied in the resolutions of U. N. C. I.P. of August 13, 1948 and January 5, 1949 which brought about the cessation of hostilities has already been discussed. The agreement was a great triumph for the democratic forces in Kashmir because it proved that aggression could not pay and that the will of the Kashmiris alone could solve the future of the State.

Understandably from the moment firing of the guns stopped on the war front to the present day the idea of a free plebiscite has been haunting the Nationalists and the Congressmen, indeed almost all Hindus, like a nightmare. They do not believe that the State Muslims will vote for accession to India. At the same time they feel that under international pressure it might not be possible to avoid the plebiscite for all time.

For one year and a half after securing personal power the Nationalist leaders went on loudly proclaiming that "Kashmir has an honourable place in India," that "Kashmir will vote for India", that "History will repeat itself if Kashmir goes to Pakistan," that "Kashmiris are determined to fight the two-nation theory," that "Pakistan does not want a free plebiscite," and that "so long as one Kashmiri is alive he will not even think of joining Pakistan"; but it was evident to the meanest intelligence that the Kashmir Muslims disliked to remain with India and were determined to overthrow the Nationalists.

Under the Communist inspiration the Nationalist leaders began to flirt with the idea of Independent Kashmir. Abdullah even suggested that this alone could be the real solution of the problem in his Press interview which subsequently he was forced to contradict under instructions of his New Delhi patrons. But the rejection of the independence plan did not remove the sword of Democles in the shape of the impending plebiscite which hangs

over the head of the Nationalists. It is evident that the result of the plebiscite mainly depends on the attitude that the State Muslims adopt on the fateful day of the recording of votes. The Nationalists were therefore easily able to persuade the Government of India that the grievances of the Kashmir Muslims must be redressed and their demands speedily met if they were expected to vote for India. And these grievances and demands came on unendingly. For a year or so after assumption of power the Nationalists beat the trumpets that they had ended the Dogra rule and had set up a completely free government in the State. By summer 1949 this slogan weared very thin and the Nationalists were perturbed. They approached New Delhi with the demand that the Hindu Maharaja should not be allowed to remain in Kashmir as his very presence was disliked by the Muslims. The demand was in violation of the plighted word because Abdullah himself had promised in November 1947 that he would make the Maharaja the king of the whole State and had invited the Dogra ruler back to the Valley in summer 1948. But Nehru Government, conscious of the strong resistance movement in the Valley, yielded and advised Hari Singh to voluntarily remain in exile. The Maharaja had no choice but to agree. On June 20, 1949 he appointed his son, Yuvraj Karan Singh, to carry on all functions of the State, legislative, executive and judicial, as the Regent during the period of his temporary absence from the country.

The Nationalists declared that this time the revolution was complete as the symbol of autocracy had been turned out of Kashmir. But only a few weeks later this slogan also lost its charm because to the Muslims replacement of the father by his son did not make any difference. The Nationalists now turned to the economic front. In 1950 the Abdullah Government promulgated two ordinances, one to abolish big estates and another to scale down rural indebtedness. Most of the land in the State belonged to Hindu landlords and the peasantry in the Valley is entirely Muslim. Generally in Kashmir the usurers and *sahukars* are all Hindus and the debtors are mostly Muslim. The beneficiaries under the provisions of the two ordinances

were therefore mostly Muslim and the losers were Hindu. Not only the Nationalists and their friends in India but almost all progressives and leftists outside the State were of the strong hope that agrarian reforms and the scaling down of rural indebtedness would surely prove successful in changing the Muslim opinion about accession where even the establishment of "popular" Government and the externment of the Maharaja had failed. And for some months it appeared that it would be so.

But by the end of 1950 Muslim opinion was as hostile to the Nationalists as before. It was argued that there was no popular Government in Kashmir as the Nationalists were not elected but nominated by the Maharaja and put in the seats of power with the support of Indian bayonets; that the Dogra Raj was still in existence and Yuvraj Karan Singh who headed the State was the representative of the Maharaja and that the agrarian reforms would have come sooner or later whether Kashmir joined India or Pakistan because both the countries are committed to the abolition of *jagirdari* and *zamindari* systems.

The changes effected in the political and economic spheres by the Nationalist Government appeared revolutionary to the Hindus particularly to the vested interests among them. Had the Nationalist rulers been successful in persuading the Muslim masses to give up their emotional attachment with Pakistan by these bribes and gifts Hindus would have willingly made the sacrifice. But any body with eyes to see and ears to hear could know that Kashmir Muslims were as pro-Pakistan as ever. The Hindus in all parts of the State therefore felt exasperated at this appeasement policy of the Nationalists. However post-partition happenings had demoralized them and they did not know what to do. Besides, in the Valley and adjoining parts they are in a small minority dispersed all over the vast area. Therefore they had to mutely bear all the high handedness and the injustice of the new rulers.

In 1950 the Nationalists wanted to do something new to catch the imagination of the Muslims. They decided to convene a constituent assembly to settle the vital problems facing the

nation including the future of the Dogra Raj, compensation to landlords and the accession issue. It was also announced that the Assembly would draw up a Constitution for the State. Immediately after this announcement was made there was fierce opposition from all sides. Hindus did not like the convening of the Assembly because they thought that it would prove harmful to their communal and vested interests as the activities of the Nationalists on the whole had proved to be.

Conditions in the Jammu province are entirely different from those obtaining in Kashmir. The ratio of Hindus to Muslims at present in the three districts of the Jammu province is about 50 : 1. The infinitesimal fraction of the Muslim minority is slowly diminishing as batches of Muslims are crossing the cease-fire line to join their co-religionists in Azad Kashmir and Pakistan.

As a class Jammu Hindus, popularly known as Dogras, have been frankly and outspokenly communal and anti-democratic in outlook ever since July 1931. "The spirit of democracy has badly dominated Hindus", growled Kaviraj Vaishno Gupta in his presidential address to a conference of Dogra Hindus held in Muzaffarabad on May 19, 1945 under the auspices of the Rajya Hindu Sabha. "They forget that if the brains of two thousand sheep are put together, they can neither form the head nor the heart of a lion". Kaviraj added that "there can be no question of unity with a Muslim because his culture, his name, civilisation and *dharma* are alien. Hindus and Muslims are like two vehicles one going west another going east. Anyone who suggests their fantastic unity should be considered mad else he is playing fraud". The Kaviraj declared that "if reservations in State services, scholarships, and seats in Legislature on communal basis are stopped then within ten years we can bring all people from Suchetgarh to Lhasa back into the Hindu fold"

Unlike Kashmiri Pandits none of the Dogras joined the National Conference till very late in the day and when finally a few joined the organisation it was not to see the Muslim masses liberated ; it was to get them chained by Hindu

imperialism of India, in a new way through Gandhian nationalism as suited the changed times. Some of the Dogras had the far-sightedness to understand that the Hindu rule could in no case continue in the century-old form for many years to come. So if Kashmir was to be kept under Hindu dominance new methods had to be devised. When Abdullah fell into the hands of the designing Congress leaders these Dogras saw that the opportunity had come and that they should support the Nationalist movement in the interests of Hindu conservatism and reaction. They therefore became ardent adherents of Sher-i-Kashmir and supported his fraudulent slogans and shibboleths. Even for adoption of this pseudo-revolutionary attitude the Dogras (as a community) bitterly criticised those few of their youngsters who joined the Nationalist ranks.

On the eve of independence of the subcontinent of India, Dogras supported a proposal mooted in certain quarters that Kashmir should neither join India nor Pakistan but remain independent. For obvious reasons it was unthinkable for them to allow the State, despite its Muslim majority, to accede to Pakistan; they did not also like it to join India because they were afraid that the Maharaja might be deprived of his authority under Nehru's directions and the Nationalists put on the saddle with the imaginable results. Therefore they wanted the State to remain aloof and independent, so that the Dogra Raj could continue to exist in all its glory and grandeur. They did not bother to think about the might of Kashmir Democracy or the revolutionary upsurge that was shaking the whole subcontinent. Perhaps they were over-confident of the strength of the reputed Dogra Army.

The great killings, mass exodus and unprecedented upheavals before and after August 15, 1947 rapidly changed the opinion among the Dogras about the future of the State. With coming into existence of Pakistan they were strident in demanding that the State should accede to India, but when the Muslim uprising backed by Pakistan elements engulfed the Valley forcing the Maharaja to quit, they staunchly advocated the partition of the State on communal basis and vigorously worked to this end. As

already stated Abdullah publicly rebuked them for doing so in November 1947 when the Nationalists were determined to instal the Maharaja as king of the whole State.

Dogras are deeply grateful to India for having despatched her armies at the nick of time to ward off the outside attack and to suppress the popular uprising against the Maharaja, but like Kashmiri Pandits, they were highly dissatisfied with the Abdullah Government and its doings. There never was any love lost between the Kashmir Nationalists and the Dogras. But when India sent her armies into the State which saved the people of Jammu from falling a prey to the tribal incursion the Dogra leaders bowed their heads before Nehru and, under his directions, accepted the Nationalist administration as the legal and the constitutional Government of the State. Abdullah's pro-Maharaja opportunist speeches and declarations soon after his release from imprisonment in September 1947 too duped them. Possibly they also thought it indiscreet and impolitic to offend the public opinion in India, which was deeply appreciative of the Nationalists. It would have looked ungrateful to oppose the wishes of Pandit Nehru, "the saviour and defender of Kashmir".

But the doings of the Nationalist Government brought the Dogras into clash with it. In all the measures adopted and the policies pursued by the Nationalists in power there was a divergence in their views and those of the Jammu Hindu leaders. Be it the question of the future of the royal family, the national language, the national flag, the text books in the schools or anything under the sun, at every step the Nationalists and the Dogras found themselves poles apart. It is not surprising when one knows, that while the Nationalists, despite their humanist and altruistic professions, are trying to foist Muslim nationalism on the whole State to appease the Muslims of the Valley, the Dogras are keenly desirous of seeing Hindu nationalism fructify in the country. There is a clash of ideals.

The Dogras wanted the Maharaja to be the constitutional head of the State wielding wide prerogatives and powers in

cases of emergency so that the Muslim majority does not do whatever it likes. They are opposed to all the reforms introduced by the Nationalists because they feel that the changes have weakened the Hindu vested interests in the country. Of course Dogras also strongly resent and protest against the fascist and gangster methods of the Nationalists when directed against them, though they remain silent and indeed feel inwardly delighted when these methods are applied to crush the Muslims and fighters for freedom in the Valley. Dogras feel that if left unchecked the Nationalists will destroy Hindu culture and ruin the Hindu minority in the State in many ways.

Like Kashmiri Pandits, Dogras approached the Congress rulers in New Delhi to represent their grievances in the hope that these will find immediate redressal and the Nationalists will be made to see reason and moderation. But they met with no better results. Undeterred, however, the leaders returned to their place of birth not like Kashmiri Pandits dejected and despondent, but with the iron resolve to organise and give a tough fight to national fascism. They could do in the Jammu province what Kashmiri Pandits could not do in the Valley because the Dogras have the preponderating majority in the three districts of Kathua, Udhampur and Jammu bordering on India. Early in 1948 the Jammu Hindus rallied under the banner of Praja Parishad. The Nationalists seemingly ignored it. They boosted such elements among the Dogras which habitually sing the praises of Nehru and the National Conference. With the backing of the Congress Press in India for sometime the trick appeared to work successfully. But early in 1949 there was the first clash between the Nationalist Government and the Praja Parishad. There was repression and hundreds of Dogra workers including the 70 year-old Parishad President, Prem Nath Dogra, were arrested. It awakened the communal consciousness among Dogras all over the province as the 1931 movement had aroused among the Kashmir Muslims with the inevitable consequences. For the first time Dogras forgot the caste distinctions and stood together under one banner. Among the arrested were Brahmins, Harijans, Rajputs,

Khatris and Mahajans. Men as well as women joined the satyagraha and courted arrest. Dogra Nationalists lost the little following they had and the Praja Parishad became the one popular political party of the Jammu Hindus.

The halo that had appeared round the figures of the Muslim leaders especially Abdullah in the eyes of the State Hindus at the time of tribal incursion disappeared within a year of the Nationalist rule. Hindus felt disillusioned about the patriotism, honesty and sincerity of the Nationalists. In their turn the Nationalist Muslims also began to suspect the Hindus. After having stood the terrific shock born of the devastating disturbances of 1947-48 the Dogra Hindus recovered in 1949 and started an anti-Nationalist agitation during summer that year when 294 members of the Praja Parishad were imprisoned. Congress leaders disliked the rift between the State Hindus and the Nationalists. Some of the prominent members of the Indian Parliament intervened, the agitation was brought to an end and all the leaders and workers of the Parishad were unconditionally released in September. But the Dogras and the Kashmiris could not become friends. There was nothing personal in the dispute. The differences were deeper born of conflicting ideologies. Though both swore by the noble principle of secularism the Dogras identified that much misunderstood creed with Hindu Nationalism while the Kashmiri leaders could see secularism nowhere except in Muslim Nationalism of their own. Therefore the fire of discontent continued to burn in the Dogra hearts. The Parishad workers carried their message of hatred against the Nationalist rule wherever they went and spread disaffection in every nook and corner of the Jammu province. In 1950-51 this movement assumed formidable proportions. Had the elections to the constituent assembly been fair and impartial it was certain that the Nationalists would have been vanquished at the polls in the Jammu province. But though the Congress leaders and the Indian Press did not like to see the Nationalists defeated in the Valley by their pro-Pakistan opponents and too gladly connived at the cruel and unscrupulous methods that the Nationalists utilised in

that part of the State to suppress people, they became uncomfortable to hear the harrowing stories of ruthless repression in Jammu which the Dogras carried to them. These stories received wide publicity in a powerful section of the Indian Press.

In Kashmir now the same history began to repeat itself through which the subcontinent had passed during the decade 1937-47. The Muslim Nationalism came more and more into clash with the Hindu Nationalism. The former was represented by the National Conference and the latter by the Praja Parishad, the only difference being that whereas in the subcontinent both the National Congress and the Muslim League were absolutely free, in Kashmir the National Conference is under the handicap of being subservient to the Indian Government which is the spiritual ally of its opponent the Praja Parishad. For that reason in any tussle between the two the National Conference is always sure to be defeated finally if not during the course of the fight.

In the Kashmir Valley all the opposition parties boycotted the elections to the so-called Constituent Assembly when they were held in October 1951. Not a single voter went to the polls. In Jammu the Praja Parishad decided to fight the elections but bitter experience taught the Dogra leaders that the Nationalist Government wanted to crush the opposition even when it was pro-India and could not tolerate to see anyone but a Nationalist returned to the Assembly. Therefore the Praja Parishad also withdrew its candidates and decided to non-cooperate and boycott the elections. As a result all the seats in the Assembly were filled with the Nationalists.

The elections of the Constituent Assembly widened the gulf between the Dogras and the Nationalists. The situation worsened in the beginning of 1952 when on January 15, about ten to fifteen students in the Government College in Jammu demonstrated against the hoisting of the National Conference Flag alongside the Indian Union Flag at an official function in the premises of the Gandhi Memorial College where Abdullah was to speak. Some of the students were expelled from the college which added fuel to the fire of disaffection.

The students started a *satyagraha* and ten of them were arrested and detained in the Jammu Central Jail. To protest against the arrests a big procession comprising of thousands was carried out in the city on February 8. The demonstrators went to the Secretariat where they became violent, broke a wall, entered the offices, burnt furniture and records. Immediately the "popular" Government approached the Indian Military for help. A curfew was clamped on the city for seventy-two hours during which period no one could move from his house thus making the condition of the citizens miserable. Strangely enough, the Government released the students but arrested the top-ranking leaders of the Praja Parishad, including Prem Nath Dogra, none of whom had participated in the procession. "We have decided to deal directly with the Praja Parishad organisation which is using the students for its own ends", declared Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed in a Press Conference.

The distressing reports about the Jammu disturbances, the attack on the Secretariat, the calling out of the troops, the arrest of the Dogra leaders and above all the imposing of the curfew for seventy-two hours perturbed and annoyed the Indian Press. How could the Hindu journalists remain passive spectators when their own co-religionists were in trouble ? The Nationalist Government began to be chided, rebuked, warned and challenged.

Though Nehru, the patron of the Nationalists, evinced from the very outset no sympathy with the Praja Parishad or its cause yet he could not face with equanimity the enraged Hindu opinion in India. It appears that the Prime Minister had members in his own Cabinet who disapproved of the suppression of their Hindu brethren in Jammu. N.G. Ayyengar was among them and when he went to Jammu in the beginning of April, ostensibly in connection with the inauguration of a new bridge over river Tawi on Udampur-Ramnagai Road, he advised the Nationalist Government to release the Parishad leaders and form friendship with them. No doubt the advice was an instruction from the Imperialist Government at New Delhi.

The Parishad leaders were unconditionally released forthwith even while Ayyengar was in Jammu. Only a fortnight earlier had Abdullah firmly announced at a public function organised by the Kashmir Labour Union that "so long as Parishad leaders did not give proof of their adherence to lawful and constitutional methods of action they would be kept under proper control". Obviously he had yet to learn that under secular India while Muslim Nationalism is taboo the Hindu Nationalism (which is another name for Hindu communalism) is adored and its votaries, even if law-breakers, are honoured as patriots. But this incident instead of bringing the Nationalists and the Dogras together only proved an added cause of estrangement.

The prestige of the Nationalists suffered in the eyes of the State people particularly the Muslims and the popularity of the Dogra leaders immensely increased by this incident. What could Abdullah do to restore his position? He had secured power for his party ; he had deprived the Maharaja of all authority in the administration of the State; he had snatched land from Hindu landlords in the Valley and given it to Muslim tillers of the soil ; he had got the debts scaled down and thus deprived Hindu *sahukars* of a pretty large sum of money. There was no more any vested interest in possession of State Hindus which he could take away and give to Muslims to coax them. One thing that more than any other could have mightily and genuinely appeased his co-religionists would be his declaration that the State should not form part of India. But even if he was desirous of making it, after having gained experience, he could not have the courage because of the obvious immediate consequences to himself. In sheer desperation therefore he fell foul of his Hindu patrons. On April 19, 1952 at Ranbirsinghpura he made a sensational speech. He said :

> "It is very well for the people in India to think that communalism in India has been finally eliminated but no one can deny that the communal spirit still exists in India. Many Kashmiris fear what will happen to them and their position if, for instance, something happens to Pandit Nehru".

Only a fortnight earlier on March 25, Abdullah had, while

paying tributes to the people of India in a meeting of his Constituent Assembly, stated :

> "The people of India have in the general elections, held aloft the glorious ideals of secularism and democracy once again under the inspiring and dynamic leadership of Mr. Nehru. The victory of the principle of secular democracy in these elections is in no small measure a vindication of the self-same ideals and principles for which Kashmir has been struggling."

A few days still earlier immediately after his return from Paris he had told a big gathering on February 14, at Chowpathy Sands, Bombay :

> "Pakistan was achieved at the cost of the blood and tears of millions of people who suffered before and after partition at the hands of Pakistani leaders. Those leaders used to preach to the Muslims that they cannot be free in Hindu dominated India, but in the recent general elections you have proved to the hilt that communal bigotry cannot flourish in our country. This is a great lesson to the people of Pakistan and a great victory for the secular democracy to which India is pledged."

There was consternation followed by annoyance and anger in the whole of India at this *volte face* of Abdullah. "Indian merchants have refused to give any credit to the mercantile community of Jammu and Kashmir State and business here has been adversely affected by recent utterances of Sheikh Abdullah", revealed Girdhari Lal Anand, President of the Chamber of Commerce, Jammu, in a Press conference on 19th April. Very interesting and frank observations were made by the patrons of the Nationalists. It is worthwhile to record what Acharya Kripalani's weekly *Vigil*, New Delhi wrote. Abdullah had attacked the Indian Press in his Ranbirsinghpura speech for criticising his policy. "We thought", wrote *Vigil*, "Abdullah knew what he owed to the Indian Press. What made him forget the debt? Has not the Indian Press done its utmost to build him up as Kashmir's "saviour" ? Has the Indian Press been more generous to any other person? Has it not been a polite convention with the main Indian Press to avoid all mention of some of the props on which Sheikh Abdullah's authority in Kashmir and his prestige outside rest? If facts in Kashmir have not been always well covered in the Indian Press, whom has this shortcoming

benefited more, Sheikh Abdullah or his critics? It has been by constantly looking at his own reflection in the mirror of the Indian Press that Sheikh Abdullah has formed his own very high notion about himself. If the mirror has not been quite true, its error has surely been on the side of exaggeration". If this was the tone and temper of the avowed Gandhists one can imagine what the extremist sections among the Hindus thought and said. In order to mollify the aggrieved Hindu Nationalism Nehru had to admit in a public meeting in Delhi on April 13, that Abdullah's observations were "not pleasing".

In the summer session of the Constituent Assembly the Nationalist leaders precipitately got the red flag of the National Conference adopted as the National Flag of Kashmir. This further alienated the sympathies of the Hindus in India. Writing editorially on June 26 the habitual supporter of the Nationalists, the Congress mouthpiece *Hindustan Times*, remarked : "Whatever may be the interpretation of Article 370 and other Articles in the Constitution as regards the legal and constitutional relationship of Kashmir with India it will not be right for the Kashmir authorities to take any action in regard to these constitutional issues without bearing in mind its being as an integral part of the Union and taking fully into consideration the effect of such actions on the Union as a whole or other units". This was a warning.

In the new atmosphere in India which Abdullah's Ranbirsinghpura speech generated, the Parishad leaders got a hearing in all sections of the people including the Congressmen. They took the fullest advantage of Abdullah's folly. The Nationalists were now deeply annoyed and in despondency Abdullah declared in a public meeting that "If Jammu and Ladakh so desire they can decide to integrate with India and leave the Valley free to have a limited accession". This again proved helpful to the Parishad leaders in their anti-Nationalist campaign.

In the 3rd week of June 1952 the Parishad leaders submitted a memorandum to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India, in which the Dogras claimed the right to determine their own

future. "We want the entire Constitution of India to apply to Jammu", they demanded. "We want to have the protection of the Supreme Court. We want to enjoy the fundamental rights as all Indians do. We want the same flag as is allowed to other States and not the red flag now selected by Sheikh Abdullah. We feel it is our patriotic duty to resist with all strength at our command any attempt to thwart full accession of Jammu to India". Referring to the Constituent Assembly the memorandum said : "It is clearly a packed body and consists of nominees of a single party. It is not a sovereign body. It does not represent the people of the State at all. The people of Jammu have no voice in it. Moreover, the representatives of the State in the Indian Parliament are all nominees of this Assembly. Thus we have no representation in Parliament either." The activities and views of the Parishad leaders as well as the memorandum received a wide publicity in the Indian Press which enraged the Nationalists. There was tension and fearing lest something untoward takes place Nehru summoned all the top-ranking Nationalist leaders to New Delhi. For weeks there were talks between the Government of India and the leaders. It was reported that a pact had been signed but it was never made public. Only Nehru gave a statement explaining the provisions of the pact.

This statement which the Prime Minister of India made in the Indian Parliament on July 24, makes an amusing reading. It showed in what an unenviable position Nehru had placed himself with regard to the future of the Jammu and Kashmir State. In order to make, if he could, the Nationalist clique popular among the Kashmiris, at any rate till the day of the impending plebiscite, Nehru was at pains to prove that the Nationalists were *pucca* revolutionaries and fighters for complete freedom of Kashmir in every sphere, but, simultaneously, to appease the public opinion in India which had grown strident and critical against the Nationalists during past months, he attempted to demonstrate that the autonomy of Kashmir was illusory and the authority of imperialist India was paramount and supreme in the State just as it is in any other

part of the Republic. Throughout his statement the Indian Prime Minister blew hot and cold in the same breath. It was little wonder that neither Muslims in Kashmir nor ultra Nationalist Hindus in India or Dogras in Jammu were satisfied with the outcome of the talks.

However, reading closely between the lines of Nehru's statement one would not fail to find that, on the whole, Dogra Hindus had achieved a victory over the Kashmir Nationalists. That was again not surprising because while Kashmir Nationalists were forlorn and forsaken in their home and suspected outside Dogra Hindus were practically backed by the whole of Hindu India in their demand. No Government at New Delhi could afford to displease the Hindu public opinion however irrational, anti-democratic or chauvinistic it might be.

Coming to the agreements and decisions it was clear that the President of India would constitutionally become dictator of Kashmir State just as he could assume that supreme position in whole India or any part thereof when he chose to do so merely by declaring that a state of emergency had arisen due to invasion, external danger or internal disturbances. He was also to be the final authority to approve the appointment of the Head of Kashmir State. The tricolour Indian flag with Asoka (Dharma) Chakra in the centre was to be the National Flag of Kashmir. The Nationalist clique had also agreed to liberalise the definition of the State Subject presumbly to enable Indians to purchase land and secure Government appointments in Kashmir because liberalisation in the given context could bear no other connotation. Every Kashmiri knew what that meant ; colonisation of the Valley and surrounding parts was the dream of British Imperialists in the past and is the dream of Indian Imperialists at present.

About the much discussed question of the Head of State while Maharaja Hari Singh "went" Karan Singh was to take his place as the "freely" elected head. The election had already been made in New Delhi for the people of Kashmir by the imperialist rulers of India. Hari Singh was to draw his huge privy purse of rupees fifteen lakhs and it would be he who

would pay the salary of one lakh to Karan Singh. Thus after all the dethroned Maharaja was to be the paymaster of the "elected head" of the "New Kashmir" State. And this was advertised as the ending of the Dogra rule in Kashmir, a great achievement indeed to the credit of the Nationalist clique in the New Delhi pourparlers !

But the most atrocious of all the decisions arrived at was about the fundamental rights and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. Nehru observed in the course of his statement : "There is general agreement that there should be fundamental rights and those fundamental rights should be applied to the State". Doubtless this declaration would be reassuring as well as gratifying but the Prime Minister of India added an important and significant proviso. He said : "Owing to the invasion by the raiders and Pakistani troops constant attempts are made at infiltration, espionage, sabotage, etc. There is some tension, internally. If you go there you will find normalcy and that the State is functioning adequately; but behind the normalcy is this constant tension because of the enemy trying to come in to create trouble and disturb. The State Government has to be wary and watchful all the time. So we are told that possibly some parts of the fundamental rights provision might very well hamper the activities of the State Government from taking these precautions. We agree that it is essential in the interest of Kashmir situated as it is now that the State Government should have the necessary authority". Obviosuly the fundamental rights were not to be given to all the State people. Some would of course get these but others would continue to be deprived of them and it would be for the Nationalist Government to discriminate between the two categories. Nehru indicated the classes of the unfortunate ones who would enjoy no fundamental rights. It would be those who "attempt at infiltration, espionage, sabotage, etc". As everybody in Kashmir knows from experience during past six years all those people not agreeing with Nationalist politics especially in basic matters such as the accession issue are usually declared as "enemy agents, spies and saboteurs". In other words therefore those people, however

peaceful or law abiding, who wanted the State to accede to Pakistan or establish democratic set-up in Kashmir after the overthrow of the present fascist, totalitarian and despotic regime of the Nationalist clique, would be deprived of the fundamental rights.

Similar was the case with the agreement about the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. According to Nehru it was agreed that "the Supreme Court should have jurisdiction in regard to fundamental rights which were agreed to by the State". Having deprived opponents of the regime and fighters for freedom of all fundamental rights, the Nationalists wanted to be sure that the victimised patriots got no opportunity to approach the Supreme Court, the only place where justice could be had. The Supreme Court would therefore have power to restore the rights of only pro-India State people and reactionary classes or one might say in blunt language the State Hindus whom the Nationalists, benefiting from recent experience, would no more dare touch. When pro-Pakistan Muslims or fighters for freedom are victimised the Supreme Court would be helpless. Undoubtedly such a disgraceful scheme of things had the whole-hearted support of the reactionary classes and aggressive Nationalists in India. But every liberal, democrat and lover of Humanism deeply regretted that such invidious distinctions should have been observed with regard to different classes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir State.

Unmindful of his real position and in utter disregard of the consequences, the spoilt protege of Nehru had, in his Ranbirsinghpura speech, bluffed and bullied and threatened the people of India. The bluff having been called Imperialist India planned to make Kashmir a completely conquered State in every respect. Premier Nehru assured the Indian Parliament that "there is nothing final about this (agreement) and gradually we can fill in further details". So New Delhi decisions were only a thin end of the wedge. The Prime Minister ended his statement by saying that "all States had acceded in the beginning in regard to only three subjects. May be (in Kashmir) we may have more subjects later". These words conveyed the

shape of things to come so far as the future of the State of Jammu and Kashmir was concerned. Fighters for Kashmir's freedom made a note of it.

In order to hide their humiliation the Nationalists attempted to arrange a grand reception for Abdullah on his return from Delhi after signing the agreement "It is not a paper agreement", declared Abdullah in a meeting of party workers in Jammu on July 25, "but a union of hearts which no power on earth can loosen". The Indian Press helped him by emphasising that the agreement was a unique success for the Kashmir Nationalists. Indeed one journal observed that by this pact "Kashmir had not acceded to India; it was India which had acceded to Kashmir". Abdullah was built up again as a national hero. All this propaganda had the object to dupe Kashmir Muslims but as regards the Congress leaders they fully understood the implications of the Delhi Agreement. Nehru himself confessed it when he gave a statement in the Council of State on February 17, 1953 while informing the House about the developments in connection with the Praja Parishad agitation which I shall presently discuss. "The whole agitation in the State", said the Prime Minister, "is for complete integration with India. I have no objection to that. When the State acceded to India it had done so like any other State. The accession has been complete". Speaking specifically about the Delhi Pact Nehru said :

> "Thanks to the wise policy of Sardar Patel the other States had been fully integrated. In view of the war and the U.N. and such other problems we could not however follow that policy in Kashmir. The agreement entered into last year (Delhi Agreement) has however resulted in a further degree of integration."

So it was only a matter of time when Kashmir would be merged with India. It did not take long for this truth to be known. Within a short time Dogras began to clamour for the implementation of the Delhi Agreement but the Nationalists hesitated to act. Things came to a head by the end of 1952 when the Parishad leaders became impatient. Meanwhile the Nationalists, to appease the Kashmir Muslims and in an attempt to enhance the prestige of their party, implemented two resolu-

tions of the Constituent Assembly. First, the Maharaja's flag was replaced by the red party flag and, second, Yuvraj Karan Singh was "elected" as Sadar-i-Riyasat (Head of the State) in place of the Maharaja whose authority was terminated with the abolition of the hereditary rule of the Dogras.

Had the Nationalists simultaneously implemented other agreements which Nehru had announced in the Parliament on July 24, there might not have been any excitement among Hindus. No doubt, the Constituent Assembly as well as the Working Committee of the National Conference confirmed the Delhi Pact, both unanimously in their respective sessions soon after the return of the leaders from Delhi ; but for reasons, which were never fully and satisfactorily explained the Nationalists did not ask the Assembly to adopt any resolution confirming the accession of the State to India. Nor were the fundamental rights granted to the State people as had been envisaged in the Delhi Pact. Perhaps in cooler atmosphere of the Valley the Nationalist leaders fully grasped the implications of the Pact and the wrath of the Kashmiris against it. They must also have found out that it meant curtailment of their own powers and a further step towards integration of the State with India. So they cleverly postponed introducing resolutions, calculated to exasperate the Muslims, in the Assembly and only adopted that part of the Pact which they thought would dupe the Valley people that it conferred freedom on the country. What effect it produced on the Muslim opinion we need not discuss here. But the Jammu Hindus felt restive and Prem Nath Dogra, President, Praja Parishad, declared at a Press Conference in New Delhi on October 20, that they would start *satyagraha* in Jammu. He and his colleagues toured many parts of India and explained their views to the Hindus at several important centres. It was evident that the adherents of such parties as Jan Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha and Ram Rajya Parishad were very friendly to the Dogras in their demand; Congressmen, Socialists and Communists were not also hostile or even indifferent. Indeed, some of the latter were as sympathetic as the former.

On their return from India-wide tour the Praja Parishad

leaders held a convention of their workers in Jammu in the month of November where it was unanimously decided to launch a movement against the decisions of the Nationalist Government. The convention adopted several resolutions demanding deletion of Article 370 from the Constitution and full integration of Kashmir with India. It denounced a separate flag, a separate president and a separate constitution for the State. The Dogra leaders saw that the time was ripe for a clash. It started rather strangely.

On November 5, Abdullah advised his Constituent Assembly to accept Yuvraj Karan Singh as Head of the State because all the Nationalist leaders "had been impressed by the Yuvraj's intelligence, broad outlook and keen desire to serve the country". The Assembly of hand-picked men was too willing and obliging to agree and twenty-one year old son of the Dogra Maharaja was unanimously elected as the Sadr-i-Riyasat on November 14. "Today the National Conference", said Abdullah on the occasion, "has given proof that it was actuated by the highest principle of democracy and not by rancour or animosity in its struggle against autocracy. I am glad that the House has made a splendid, and if I may say so, a befitting gesture to Shri Karan Singh Ji by according him the unique honour of choosing him as the first Sadr-i-Riyasat". Little could Abdullah imagine that this Head of the State would only after nine months unceremoniously dismiss him from office.To accept Karan Singh, a scion of the Dogra royal dynasty, as Head of "New Kashmir" State was another opportunist move to appease Hindu communalism and Dogra nationalism. But it failed to achieve its object.

On November 24, the Yuvraj as Sadr-i-Riyasat came to Jammu. The Nationalist Government had arranged a public reception for him but the Praja Parishad asked the people to boycott the ceremony and observe *hartal*. The call of the Parishad leaders was whole-heartedly responded. If the Nationalists banked on the inherent sense of loyalty among Dogra masses towards Yuvraj Karan Singh they must have been sorely disillusioned. Though many threats had been held out by Pari-

shad leaders prior to Yuvraj's election of disowning him if he accepted the offer yet no one could believe that the boycott of his reception would be so complete. And the resentment among the people was not artificial; it was genuine and deep. The Parishad volunteers could not remain peaceful. They destroyed the festoons, the arches, the buntings and in fact everything they could lay their hands upon which the official receptionists had arranged with much labour and at great expense. There were no people visible anywhere on the route from the aerodrome to the palace. Only a few officials and the Ministers could be seen in their cars. There were also Parishad volunteers who were throwing bundles of anti-Nationalist propaganda literature in the cars that followed the Yuvraj.

On November 26, Prem Nath Dogra and fourteen others were arrested without any charge. Thus started the agitation of the Dogra Hindus with the slogan, "one president, one flag and one constitution."

The ground having been already well prepared in Jammu and support of a powerful section of the Indian Press being assured from the very start the agitation spread rapidly to practically every village of the province. Knowing well that the Parishad ideology had deeply affected the Dogra officers the Nationalists requested the Government of India to loan Kashmir a few hundred policemen. This request was readily acceded to and not only was a contingent of Punjab Police despatched forthwith, a tear gas squad was also sent along with it. Nehru who used to declare repeatedly that Kashmir was completely free in its internal administration did not have any qualms of conscience in sending the outside police to the State to suppress an agitation of the Hindus who could never desire the subversion of the State or mean any harm to India.

For many weeks there were widespread disturbances all over the province. Despite the stationing of armed police in all parts and imposition of ban on all demonstrations, mammoth processions were carried out, public meetings were held and the orders of the authorities defied at scores of places every day. The Nationalist Government had virtually come to an end in

Jammu. But for the presence of Indian Military it could not have remained in existence. Neither the Ministers nor the Sadr-i-Riyasat could muster courage to move outside their houses for many days. Occasionally they attended their offices under heavy armed escort.

It was a queer agitation. A Hindu volunteer at the head of a procession would carry a tri-colour National Flag of India in his hand, ascend the top of an official building, throw away the red Nationalist flag fluttering there and plant the tricolour in its place. Meanwhile the armed police would come, direct tear gas at the procession to disperse it and shoot at the volunteer or warn him to desist from doing what every Indian would deem a patriotic act. Not infrequently the *satyagrahis* carried a big photograph of Rajendra Prasad, the President of India, in the procession when they were *lathi*-charged. No wonder, the Parishad agitation enlisted increasing sympathy from Hindus outside and inside the State. No wonder, the Nationalists as well as their Congress patrons felt much embarrassed to handle the situation.

The Nationalist Government utilised brutal methods to suppress the Dogra uprising. *Lathi* charge, tear gas and firing became the order of the day during the months of December and January. Crowds were fired at in Chhamb, Ranbirsinghpura, Sunderbani, Sambha, Akhnoor, Jaurian, Kishtwar, Hiranagar, Udhampur and Busohli in which as many as 30 people were killed and 131 wounded. Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed, Minister in charge of law and order, admitted in a Press statement that nearly 1300 people had been taken into custody. Women took a remarkable part in the struggle. After some weeks the Punjab armed police was found inadequate to handle the situation in Jammu. The Nationalists suspected that being Hindu the policemen were partial to the Dogra agitators. The Kashmir Government therefore deputed their own storm troopers, a contingent of the National Militia from the Valley, mostly Muslim, to deal with the disturbances.

On March 2, 1953 a delegation of the Dogra Sabha, the oldest political organisation of the State, made sensational

allegations including "molestation of women and animal-like behaviuor towards them" against men of the Militia in a memorandum which they presented to Nehru in New Delhi.

When some Hindu members in Parliament protested against the cruelty of the Kashmir Government in dealing with the agitation Nehru callously said that "if he were in charge of law and order in the State he would have taken sterner measures".

In his statement in the Indian Parliament on December 12, he observed:

> "The position thus has been that in spite of attempts to create widespread disorder and violence the Government of the State have dealt with the agitation with restraint."

Restraint indeed !

The Praja Parishad agitation got the fullest moral, material and political support of communalist parties in India. In its Kanpur session held at close of the year the Jan Sangh authorised its President, Shyama Prashad Mookerjee, "to approach the Government of India for getting the grievances of the Dogras redressed and in case he failed in this endeavour to chalk out a programme for a *satyagraha* in India in support of the Jammu agitation". Mookerjee immediately after the session started correspondence separately with Pandit Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah. This did not bear any fruit. Nehru was insistent that Jammu agitation should be stopped unconditionally before any grievances were considered. Mookerjee's main request to Nehru was to exercise his influence on the Kashmir Premier so that "at least the July agreement to bring Kashmir into constitutional structure of free India was implemented".

The Akali leader Master Tara Singh also extended fullest support to the Parishad movement. He stated in a speech in Lucknow that "Kashmir being a majority Muslim State belonged to Pakistan but that it should not be allowed to go now and refugees should be asked to settle in it". It is easy to imagine what adverse effect this statement must have produced on the Muslim opinion in the Valley.

Despite the vigorous defence of the Kashmir Government by Nehru public voice in India became more and more critical of the doings of the Nationalists. Gone were the days when Abdullah or his colleagues used to visit Delhi or any other city as honoured and beloved guests. When Abdullah attended the Congress session in January 1953 which was held at Hyderabad he had to stand virtually in the dock to answer for the accusations hurled at him. Speaking before the Subjects Committee on January 16, he pathetically pleaded that "he was not so much afraid of his enemies as he was of the attitude which some times his friends and supporters adopted towards him in India". He stated that "he was greatly pained when a strange question was raised, 'How long can Sheikh Abdullah stay with us ?' "My life is before you", he assured the Congressmen in a humble tone, "my work is before you. Whatever I am I stand for you. It is now for you to judge me". On his return journey from Hyderabad Abdullah wanted to address a public meeting at Delhi which was arranged by the local Congressmen. But in this meeting he was heckled, hooted and abused by the Hindu opponents. He tried to explain his position for nearly four hours but the disturbances persisted till the last. Armed police was conspicuous by its presence in the meeting ground.

In the Congress session at Hyderabad Nehru publicly confessed that the Jammu people suffered from certain economic hardships. This was a partial success of the Praja Parishad movement as no responsible member of either the Government of India or the Kashmir Government had said so before. A Commission of Inquiry was set up by the Kashmir Government in March under the presidentship of Chief Justice J. N. Wazir to report on the working of the land reforms in Kandi (dry) area, functioning of Government controls and measures to rehabilitate ex-servicemen and refugees.

With a view to allay the fears and suspicions of the non-Muslims living in the State particularly the Dogras and the Buddhists the Nationalist leaders prepared a constitution on the basis of federal principles for the State. The draft envisaged Jammu and Kashmir State to be a "federated and autonomous re-

public". One chapter of the draft dealt with the scheme of units in the proposed federation. It divided the State (including the Azad Kashmir areas) into five units as follows :

1. Jammu : including districts of Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur and Doda,
2. Kashmir : including districts of Srinagar, Baramulla and Anantnag.
3. Poonch : consisting of districts of Mirpur, Poonch, Muzaffarabad excluding parts of tehsil Uri now included in Baramulla district.
4. District of Ladakh including the tehsils of Skardu, Kargil and Leh.
5. Gilgit.

The plan said that for the present and till the settlement of the accession dispute the State would have only three provinces viz. Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh. "We have decided to give autonomy to different cultural units in the State", declared Abdullah in a message which was broadcast from Radio Kashmir on April 17, 1953 "so that no unit may have fear of being dominated by the other. In a democratic society it is a hateful idea that one section of the people should dominate the other. We want to provide equal opportunities to all sections of people in accordance with the needs of each cultural unit in the State. Accordingly appropriate provisions would be incorporated in the State's Constitution to ensure voluntary co-operation among various cultural groups in Jammu and Kashmir."

But as the Federal Government of Kashmir would wield the real power in all parts of the State and would be dominated by the Muslims this plan was neither acceptable to the Dogras nor to the Buddhists unless and until the State merged fully with India. The Muslim majority of Doda raised a hue and cry against the inclusion of the district in the Hindu-dominated Jammu province. In a convention of the Nationalist workers of the district a very curious and significant development was witnessed. While the Hindu speakers supported the official move the Muslim leaders hotly contested and opposed it. In these cir-

cumstances there were slender hopes for the scheme to secure popular approval.

The State Hindus and Buddhists are intolerant and in no case prepared to accept the dominance of the Muslims in politics although the latter form 78 per cent majority in the country. Communalist Prem Nath Dogra and Nationalist Kashok Bakula are one in this demand. Both insist that in case Kashmir is to enjoy full autonomy Jammu and Ladakh should be cut asunder and merged with India. Yet they naively believe that State Muslims would be prepared to accept the suzerainty of Hindu India. And all the Hindus and Buddhists swear by secularism and sincerely believe that the two-nation theory of Muslim League is dangerous and destructive. What a huge self deception has Gandhian Nationalism cultivated in the minds of its votaries.

With the failure of Mookerjee-Nehru negotiations about a settlement of the Jammu dispute early in March 1953, the three Hindu parties in India—the Jan Sangh, the Mahasabha and the Ram Rajya Parishad—decided to start a joint *satyagraha* in Delhi in support of the Praja Parishad demands. For three months the leaders and workers of these organisations defied laws in various parts of the metropolis and courted arrest. Nearly 4000 people were imprisoned. The arrests of dozens of people and *lathi* charges on processions became normal features of life at the headquarters of the Government of India.

The Nationalist leaders repeatedly declared that the peaceful Dogras were against the Parishad movement and wanted the Government to suppress it. Certain prominent Hindu leaders of India desired to tour the Jammu Province to ascertain the real condition of life and the views of the people. But they were not allowed to go there. On May 8, Dr. Mookerjee declared his intention to go to Jammu to "see things for himself behind the iron curtain". He informed Abdullah and Nehru accordingly and told a public meeting that he would not apply for a permit as was required under the rules. Asked what he would do if he were prevented by the Military from entering the State he said that "I will bend the bayonets with my hands as Nehru

did in June 1946 at Kohala". Mookerjee, accompanied by two other Hindu leaders, entered the State without permit on May 11. The Indian Government allowed them to go but they were arrested by the State Police while on their way to Jammu. Mookerjee was taken to Srinagar and lodged in a bungalow near Nishat Garden which was converted into a sub-jail. When the report about the arrest became known there was complete *hartal* in Jammu and some other towns of the province; small protest processions were also taken out. Demonstrations were held in many towns in the Punjab and U.P. where effigies of Abdullah were publicly burnt.

The main argument of Nehru and other Congress leaders against the Parishad agitation was that "it has weakened the case of India before the U.N. and the world public and helped the enemy (Pakistan)". Doubtless, the agitation had done so but was Mookerjee more to blame for it than Nehru himself ? Four Hindu M.Ps., Mookerjee, Deshpande, Trevedi and Singh, who toured the State for many days some time before the Parishad agitation started, on their return issued a statement in which they said :

> "In the name of making a psychological approach to the Muslims of Kashmir and persuading them to be more favourably disposed towards India, none has a right to pursue a policy of blind appeasement and to weaken the strength and solidarity of United India. We fail to understand why there should be any hesitation in accepting the Constitution of India which is democratic and non-communal in character."

Every honest man to whatever party, ideology or shade of opinion he belonged asked this simple question ? The demand for the inclusion of Article 370 in the Indian Constitution and the acceptance of the same by Congress leaders is self-condemnatory as it shows that even Kashmir Nationalists suspect that India is not a secular democratic country from which a fair deal can be expected. If India is a truly democratic secular State and if the Constitution of India is also democratic and secular as has been publicly admitted by Abdullah, Bakhshi, Beg, Sayid, Sadiq, and other Muslim Nationalist leaders of Kashmir times without number then what earthly objection can

they have to full integration of Kashmir with India ? Why this hesitancy and reluctance ? If on the other hand India is neither secular nor democratic in the true sense of the terms why are the Nationalists duping Kashmiris in general and State Muslims in particular by asserting what is manifestly wrong ? And why are Nehru and other Congress leaders conniving at this ?

The truth is that from the very beginning Nehru has acted undemocratically and immorally in the Kashmir affair. He stands in the Kashmir dispute on the side of tyranny, despotism, oppression and untruth. From that one basic and fundamental wrong issue all the troubles and hardships and miseries that various communities in the State have to suffer at present. The conceited Prime Minister of India is not prepared to admit his own guilt, much less to rectify the wrong and therefore he is forced to hurl all real and imaginary accusations at his critics and opponents. He is cross with the Foreign Press; he is displeased with statesmen of international repute; he has contracted enmity with Pakistan and he had to declare ultra-Nationalist Hindus as traitors to India.

While making a statement in the Indian Parliament on September 7, 1948 Nehru asked :

> "Apart from rhetoric and vague insinuations, I would like to know from anybody, friend or opponent or enemy, from that date in the last week of October, 1947 when we took that fateful decision to send our troops by air to Kashmir till today what it is that we have done in Kashmir which from any point of view, from any standard, is wrong. I want an answer to that question."

We need not quote what Azad Kashmir or Pakistan Press and leaders said in reply because they are doubtless biased in this affair. We shall put down here what an esteemed weekly, the *Independent India* of Bombay, wrote in its issue of September 19, 1948. It said :

> Through long interviews to the Press and longer speeches to the Legislature Pandit Nehru has been singing the song of high standard of morality and decency which the Government of India (meaning himself) are supposed to have maintained in their treatment of the Kashmir issue. On the other hand Pakistan case on Kashmir is based, according to the Prime Minister, on falsehood and deceit......Any dispassionate observer without being his "opponent or enemy" can give a very convincing answer provid-

ed Pandit Nehru is in a position of being convinced by rational arguments. We are afraid, however, that the excessive coating of self-righteousness in which the Prime Minister has enveloped himself would make him impervious to the rays of reason. If that were not so he should have no difficulty in realising that he and his Government have been morally wrong from beginning to end in their attitude to Kashmir. The basis of Indian troops continuing in Kashmir is nothing more than the accession to India of an autocratic Ruler who did not represent the wishes of his subjects. Having sent their troops to Kashmir the Government of India were wrong in rejecting the proposal for a plebiscite under an impartial administration which was first made by Mr.Jinnah at the beginning of hostilities and later repeated in the U.N.O. Resolution. The only type of plebiscite in which the Government of India have agreed is one which would be managed and controlled by themselves or their supporters. It is not surprising that the Government of Pakistan who were the first to ask for an impartial plebiscite in Kashmir are not agreeable to the terms and conditions sought to be imposed at the behest of the Government of India. The basic fact of the situation is that the Muslim majority of Kashmir, left to itself, is likely to vote in favour of joining Pakistan. Consequently, from the beginning to the end, the Government of India have been reluctant to allow conditions for a free voting in Kashmir. If this is consistent with morality, truth and non-violence Pandit Nehru may continue to hug that illusion. The glaring facts, however, are the blood-shed in Kashmir and the increasing impoverishment of India on account of military expenditure".

In the beginning Hindus believed that perhaps Nehru's policy might prove successful. They were even prepared to make unusual and big sacrifices for the cause. But now they are thoroughly disillusioned and in consequence would be content with what legitimately is their due.

I have never had any sympathy for reactionaries and communalists. I have always been a *persona non grata* with the Hindu bigots, upper classes and obscurantists. But communalism and non-communalism have never become a fetish with me. I consider every case on its own merits. For that reason I have no hesitation in stating that I had sympathy with the Hindus of Jammu in their distress caused by the high handedness of the Nationalists.

I know that the approach of Hindu communalists to the Kashmir problem is vitiated by unreason. While they want the Dogras to get the right of self-determination they, in

the same breath, advocate ruthless suppression of the Kashmir Muslims. Indeed, Mookerjee unabashedly stated that "if Kashmir Muslims did not like to live in India they could go but India would not leave Kashmir". He believed the Constituent Assembly of the Nationalists to be totally unrepresentative of the State people yet he demanded that this Assembly should ratify the State's accession to India which should be considered the final opinion of the people of the country. Occasionally Dr. Mookerjee also demanded that the Government of India should get the Azad Kashmir areas back, if need be by resort to war.

There was a divergence in the statements and speeches of the Dogra patriots and those of the outside Hindu leaders. The former did not lay great stress on the Valley acceding to India. Indeed, Prem Nath Dogra declared in several speeches before his arrest that the Valley may decide its future as it likes; only Jammu and Ladakh should not be tagged on to it. I considered this as a happy sign because I have always believed that the solution of the Kashmir problem lies in its division on the same principles on which the subcontinent of India was partitioned. I want that the Muslims as well as Hindus of the State should get the fullest freedom to decide their own fate and forge their own future. In that lies the progress and prosperity of Jammu and Kashmir.

Barely had Shyama Prashad Mookerjee been in detention for one month and twelve days when on June 23 in the morning most unexpectedly it was announced that he died in the Hari Singh Hospital due to a severe attack of pleurisy. The news came as a great shock to India because no report whatsoever of his sickness had been previously published in the Press. No explanations from the Kashmir Government could console the aggrieved relatives, friends and admirers of the deceased; nothing could silence the mouths of the critics. Even Congressmen found it difficult to defend the Nationalist Government. From all sides there were demands for an inquiry into the incident and the Bengal Congress Committee adopted a resolution asking the Government of India to institute the inquiry.

CLASH WITH DOGRA HINDUS

The leaders of the communal political parties like Jan Sangh, Mahasabha and Ram Rajya Parishad openly stated that Mookerjee had been deliberately done to death. It was a grave charge that had to be substantiated before any responsible man could accept its veracity. But it was clear that the Kashmir authorities were careless in not having issued regular bulletins about the health of the distinguished detenu after he had fallen ill behind the bars. Even the Kashmir Government admitted subsequently that he was ill for some days but did not satisfactorily explain why the news was withheld from the public. The great admirer of the Nationalists, Jai Prakash Narain, Indian Socialist leader, could not help observing that "Kashmir authorities were not only negligent but criminally negligent in looking after Dr. Mookerjee's health. I feel sure that the life of this great Indian could have been saved by better care".

Whether Mookerjee died due to negligence or as a result of severe attack of pleurisy the extremists in India as well as the Dogras made a political capital out of it. All Congress critics of the Praja Parishad were dumbfounded. Mookerjee's faults and his communalism were forgotten. He became the great martyr for the holy cause and Hindus without exception—secularists and communalists alike—paid glowing tributes to his memory.

When Nehru returned from London towards the close of June he found the country drowned in emotion and grief. He could not but share this national sorrow and pay his homage to the departed leader. His policy towards the Praja Parishad had also to be altered. He no more advocated sterner action. "I realize that large number of people in Jammu", confessed he, "have suffered and wherever our countrymen suffer, we share to some extent in that suffering". He appealed to the leaders of the Praja Parishad and other communalist parties in India "for the ending of this conflict and return to the normal ways of peaceful and co-operative politics".

Although Nehru had re-iterated the opinion in his statement that the Parishad agitation "could only injure the cause of

Jammu and Kashmir State and India and more particularly that of Jammu", yet in view of the Prime Minister's changed policy coupled with soothing language in which it was couched the agitation was called off on July 7, 1953 both in Jammu as well as in Delhi. The Hindu leaders expressed the hope that the grievances of the Dogras will be redressed and their demands met and that "no power on earth can cut Jammu and Kashmir State asunder from India, their common motherland". With this ended the Parishad agitation in its violent and aggressive form. Prem Nath Dogra had been released immediately after the death of Mookerjee. When the agitation was called off the Kashmir Government emptied the jails of all the detenus and prisoners belonging to the Parishad and Jan Sangh. But the patriots, fighters for freedom and democracy who had demanded withdrawal of foreign armies from the State and holding of an early plebiscite were not released. The general amnesty was not extended to them.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

ISLAMIC DEMOCRACY IN THE MAKING

"We are starting the State with no discrimination between one community and another, between caste or creed. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State. We shall keep that in front of us as our ideal."

—**Quaide Azam Jinnah.**

*The name of the State shall be the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.
*The Head of the State (of Pakistan) should be a Muslim.
*No legislature should enact any law which is repugnant to the Holy Quran and Sunnah.
*An organisation shall be set up in Pakistan which will make known the principles of Islam to the people."

—**Decisions of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly.**

IF Kashmir accedes to Pakistan, as in all probability it will if the people are afforded an opportunity to express their opinion in a free and impartial plebiscite, will the toiling millions enjoy the complete freedom in all spheres of life for which they have been fighting and sacrificing for many years and especially since 1931? That question makes fighters for freedom uneasy because no honest patriot can answer it unhesitatingly in the affirmative.

If we mean by freedom absence of restrictions on the unfoldment of potentialities of a human being, as has been explained in detail in chapter after chapter in this book, it is difficult to state that such freedom is found at present in Pakistan. There will be uncritical readers of these pages who will on reading my comments on Gandhism and the evolution of India during the past six years as a Hindu State jump at the unwarranted conclusion that I believe Pakistan to be an ideal State because choice seems to them to be only between the two. But that is not true. I do not say that Pakistan is any nearer to democracy than India is. I only hold that just as attempts are being made in Pakistan to build it as a Muslim State founded on the prin-

ciples of *Shariat* law so India is being brought up as a Hindu State governed by tenets and traditions of ancient Brahminism. The only difference between the two is that while the Congress leaders proclaim from housetops that India is a Secular State but actually build it on the basis of Brahmin culture, the League leaders practise what they profess and are trying to establish a Muslim State in Pakistan. But mere consistency between word and deed of the rulers cannot make a State progressive. League leaders may not be hypocrites like Congressmen. Nevertheless it is harmful to mix politics with religion. Pakistan no less than India is following that wrong course.

A religious State was the ideal of politicians in the medieval times when only the co-religionists of a ruler were considered full fledged citizens ; others lived at his mercy as his vassals. The advance of science and knowledge, the French, American and Russian revolutions and the recognition of the rights of man have exploded the basis of the religious State. Only obscurantists and fanatics can have any faith in this theory in modern times. Now secularism and democracy are the ideals of politics.

Complete freedom is the noblest and the highest goal of human existence. It is accepted by enlightened opinion that this objective can be achieved only through the establishment of democracy which is guided by reason. In democracy, the community is not sacrificed for the individual, nor is the individual sacrificed at the altar of the majority. In other words the fundamental principle of democracy is "all for one and one for all". It is for the attainment of such a goal that Kashmir is fighting today and has been struggling through centuries.

Now what do we see in Pakistan ? With one voice the leaders of the Muslim League, the ruling party, declare that they want to build an Islamic State in the country. Pakistan is not entirely inhabited by the Muslims. Out of its population of seven crores and sixty-two lakhs, over a crore are non-Muslims. It is grossly unfair to the 14% non-Muslim population to attempt to establish a State in the country which is founded on the basis of

the tenets and traditions of one particular religion even if the followers of that creed are in a majority. However fair and however just and generous may be the rulers towards the minorities under such a dispensation it is clear that in modern times they can never feel satisfied and contented. Psychologically they will always feel ill at ease. It is a standing humiliation for a non-Muslim to be aware of the fact that he is living in a Muslim State in the year of grace 1954. He can never feel at home and can only with great difficulty, if at all, cherish sentiments of loyalty towards such a State.

In pre-partition days the two-nation theory of the Muslim League undoubtedly proved an effective weapon in the hands of the Muslims to fight against aggressive Hindu nationalism which wanted to enslave non-Hindus in the subcontinent. But the theory had its limits. After the partition of the country this slogan has not only become useless; it is becoming positively dangerous In Pakistan Muslims are not a separate nation from the Hindus. Both together form one nation who should be called Pakistanis just as the inhabitants of any other country irrespective of their creed or caste are known as one nation. No one has heard the Muslims of Egypt or Turkey or Iran calling themselves nations separate from non-Muslims living in those countries. When a responsible Pakistani leader still harps on the two-nation theory of the pre-partition days he is doing a great disservice to his motherland because thereby he is poisoning the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims of Pakistan; he is forcing more than one crore of Pakistanis to infer that they are aliens in their homeland. How can they have any sense of loyalty towards such a State ? If not openly they will tacitly remain sullen and disloyal.

It was clearly for these reasons that on the very day Pakistan was born Quaide Azam Jinnah advised the people of Pakistan in his address to the Constituent Assembly in these words :

"If you work in a spirit of co-operation, forgetting the past and burying the hatchet, I will say that every one of you, no matter to what community you belong, no matter what your colour, caste and creed, is first,

second and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges and obligations.

You are free to go to your temples and to your places of worship in this State of Pakistan while you belong to any religion, caste or creed; that has nothing to do with the business of the State.

We are starting the State with no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, between caste or creed. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State. We shall keep that in front of us as our ideal. Hindus will cease to be Hindus and Muslims will cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense because that is the personal faith with each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the Nation".

This declaration should have buried the two-nation theory and all its concomitants. But it is a pity that this wise and historic pronouncement of the Father of Pakistani Nation has not so far been translated into action by the rulers of Pakistan. As a matter of fact some of the top leaders still occasionally raise the slogan that Hindus and Muslims are two nations. The devotees of Quaide Azam are still running after a chimera. The theory of a religious State is medieval and archaic. It can be popular only among people who are steeped in ignorance and culturally backward. It is true unfortunately that the masses of Pakistan, like the people in India, are religion-ridden and illiterate. Both countries are in many respects still passing through the period of their history which is akin to medieval ages of the West. Therefore the temptation to exploit the masses by medieval methods becomes irresistible. But most of the leaders of the Muslim League are highly educated and some are modern in outlook. In order to reconcile their declaration of establishing a Muslim State with the principles of democracy they generally furnish the explanation that Islam and democracy are identical; there is no difference between the two.

Leaders of Pakistan believe that there is nothing contradictory between the modern conception of democracy and the basic teachings of Islam. The latter do not in any way fall short of the former. Indeed, they contend, that the Islamic ideal is an advance on modern democracy in so far as the problem of morality is concerned. Therefore, they assure, the minorities should not be scared away by the declarations of Pakistan

leaders that they are determined to establish a Muslim State with the ideal of Islamic democracy before them. Dealing with the apprehensions of non-Muslims regarding the proposed Islamic Constitution for Pakistan Tamiz-ud-Din Khan, President of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, in a public speech at Mymensingh in 1948, said :

> "Nobody need be afraid of our goal because Islamic Constitution meant and stood for the highest principles of equality, fraternity and brotherhood. An Islamic Constitution resented discriminations between man and man on grounds of race, colour or for any other cause and which were to be found in several of the so-called civilized States of the day".

Speaking in a public meeting at Lahore Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din, after assuring the minorities regarding their future in Pakistan, observed :

> "Of all the greatest blessings which Islam has brought to the world equality of men is one. Islam makes no distinction between race, colour, caste or creed. The greatest proof of toleration in Islam is that there is not a single Muslim country in the world where there are no minorities and where they have not been in a position to develop their religion and culture with full freedom. Therefore, the minorities in Pakistan should remove from their minds all suspicions and misgivings about the future Constitution of Pakistan...... The building of our State on Islamic principles does not mean that the rights of non-Muslims will be ignored because interference in the freedom of minorities will by itself be an un-Islamic act. We, therefore, assure the minorities that they will be at full liberty to practise their religion, safeguard it and promote their culture like free men with full freedom".

On reading these laudable statements of the sponsors of Islamic democracy in Pakistan one is tempted to ask a question. If there is no difference between the basic tenets of Islam and the cardinal principles of democracy why do the Pakistan leaders insist on establishing a Muslim State in their country? By making Pakistan a democratic State they will allay the fears of the minorities, silence their critics and serve the cause of Islam as well. But if democracy and Islam cannot stand together then no attractive expositions or claims by the Muslim League leaders can make the Muslim State a modern democracy.

That modern democracy and a religious State based on the principles of Islam are not different could have been proved by

the leaders of the Muslim League through their actions during the last six years of their rule in Pakistan. What are the achievements to their credit ? The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan appointed a Committee to report on basic principles on which the Islamic State according to the conception of the League leaders may be founded. After discussing the subject for more than five long years the Committee submitted, on December 22, 1952, a report to the Constituent Assembly. I do not propose to discuss the recommendations made in this report in detail. But we must take notice of two of them. The first is about the Head of the State. The report lays down :

> "The Head of the State should be a Muslim and should be elected at a joint sitting of both the Houses of the Federal Legislature".
>
> (Part III Chap. I Clause 13 (1)

The second recommendation is about the procedure for preventing legislation repugnant to the Quran and the Sunnah. It directs that the Head of the State should constitute a Board of not more than five persons well-versed in Islamic laws who would scrutinize all Bills passed by the Parliament to which any objection has been raised on grounds of religion. If the Board was of the opinion that the Bill or any provision thereof was repugnant to the holy Quran and the Sunnah the Bill would be returned to the Parliament for reconsideration and would not be considered as passed unless the majority of the Muslim members present and voting in the Parliament voted for it. So the elected representatives of the people were not to be the final authority in Pakistan. It was the five mullahs euphemistically called "the persons well-versed in Islamic laws" whose opinion would in effect become the supreme verdict which would be laid down before the Parliament for formal sanction. That would be the true nature of democracy in the Muslim State. "You would notice that machinery has been created to ensure that no legislation under the new Constitution should be repugnant to the dictates of the Quran and the Sunnah", observed Nazim-ud-Din, then Prime Minister of Pakistan, presenting the Basic Principles Committee Report to the Constituent Assembly. "A Board consisting of persons learned

and well-versed in Islamic law will be available to the Head of the State for consultation in cases where objection is raised to a Bill or a portion thereof in the Legislature on the ground that it is repugnant to the Quran and the Sunnah. In case the Board unanimously support the objection, the Head of the State has been empowered to refer the Bill back to the Legislature for reconsideration. The final decision will not only require a majority of the Legislature; it will also need the support of the majority of the Muslim members, because the decision in such cases will involve an interpretation of the Quran and the Sunnah". Having brought the mullahs on the top in Pakistan politics and made them the final arbiters of the fate of eighty million people of the country Nazim-ud-Din was sure that "the interests of the true religion have been properly safeguarded and religion has itself been given the fullest scope for its beneficient activities".

About the Head of the State being a Muslim Nazim-ud-Din said that "it is in keeping with Islamic usage" and of course "it is no less democratic". Troubled by scruples of conscience which every one with modern education must have in some measure Nazim-ud-Din posed a question and answered it thus:

> "It may be said that in a country where the entire population is not Muslim, it is not proper to lay down that the Head of the State must belong to a particular religion. Such criticism would be superficial. If we look at the law and practice of some of the foremost democracies of the world, we find that the provision which the report recommends is by no means extraordinary. In a democracy like the United Kingdom the monarch must not only be a Christian but he should also belong to the Church of England. This is because the British monarch is also the head of the British Church. In the United States ot America I am not aware of any one being elected as the President who was not a Protestant.

So Islamic democracy consists in copying the worst features of the democratic constitutions of the world and not in discarding them. No democrat to my knowledge has ever approved of this relic of medievalism in the British Constitution; nor is the practice in America or any other country of choosing the Head of the State from any particular community a wholesome one. There would, however, be some slight justification for Nazim-ud-Din to

speak thus had the Basic Principles Committee adopted the British and American Constitutions in all respects. But that is not the case. It is only in regard to the religion of the Head of the State that Pakistan is anxious to copy the British, because the principle is retrograde, reactionary and medieval. What happens to the declaration of Nazim-ud-Din that "of all the greatest blessings which Islam has brought to the world equality of men is one?" Where is the profession that "Islam makes no distinction between race, colour, caste or creed?" Is this the proof of the assurance given by Quaide Azam that Muslims and non-Muslims "are all citizens and equal citizens of one State?"

This glorification of reaction is called progress and democracy by the leaders of the Muslim League. "In this way," triumphantly declared Nazim-ud-Din in his speech before the Constituent Assembly, "the recommendations provide for build ing up a truly Islamic democracy conscious of its great mission of interpreting the progressive nature of Islam to the modern world and unhampered in its work by short-sightedness, narrow-mindedness or reaction masquerading in the garb of religion".

The policy of the Pakistan rulers manifest in the Basic Principles Committee's Report is reflected in the doings of the representatives and officials of Pakistan. Abdur Rahman, Pakistan delegate to the U.N. Commission for Human Rights, opposed on May 12, 1953 a draft article granting women the same rights as men in marriage and divorce. "It is not a workable document", he said. "It could never work in any Muslim country. The men are not ready, the women are not ready, they do not want it". "What do you mean by equal rights in marriage?" he asked. "Are you giving women tha same rights as men in the Muslim countries where polygamy is allowed? Do you mean that women would be allowed to have four husbands at the same time? They are completely meaningless words. No matter what you say, women can never be equal to men in any shape or form". The Deputy Commissioner of Rawalpindi issued a fiat on the eve of Ramadhan in 1951 that even non-Muslims should not eat or drink in public during the month of fasts. In West Punjab Government school children are

compelled to recite a few verses from the Quran every day. Chaudhury Khaliq-uz-Zaman after visiting Persia, Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia in connection with the formation of Islamistan declared in Cairo on October 29, 1951, that "if and when Islamistan is formed it will prove to be an iron curtain against foreign ideologies". The obscurantist purpose of this remark is clear. The League leader wants Islamistan to keep people away from, and therefore ignorant of new trends of thought. If all this faithfully represents the conception of the Muslim State that the League leaders desire to set up in Pakistan how can any impartial man agree that future of democracy in that country is bright or that the people there can make any progress?

Islam as practised, like all other great religions of the world, is a conglomeration of many things—truths, traditions, rituals, superstitions and dogmas. Through its long and chequered history of thirteen hundred years it has evolved both sides, progressive and revolutionary as well as obscurantist and reactionary. Whatever element of progress and revolution Islam contains has been absorbed by the modern democratic and humanist culture The same has happened with Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Zoarastrianism. What actually remains of religion in the present day world is more of reaction and obscurantism than progress and revolution. "For centuries", observed Ghulam Mohammed, Governor-General of Pakistan, in a speech at Abbotabad on May 13, 1953, "Islam's history has been a record of misdeeds practised by Ulema-i-Su (the scholars of evil) who arrogated to themselves the sole authority to interpret the teachings of the Holy Quran and Sunnah. Other elements responsible for Islam's downfall were the mullahs, autocrats and feudal lords who, in order to serve their own ends, never hesitated, after the days of Khulfai Rashideen, to use Islam as a tool even at the cost of twisting and destroying altogether the spirit of Islam".

The League leaders believe they can restore Islam to its pristine purity and pave way for a democratic State. But the standard-bearers of religion in the eyes of the masses are not the educated modernists however loudly they may speak in its behalf

but the mullahs and other religious heads. The ignorant Muslim will look towards a fanatic mullah for religious guidance and not towards a westernised leader however great a scholar he may be of Islamic literature. The Congress which started brilliantly as a liberal, secular organisation turned into a handmaid of Brahminism when educated Hindus under leadership of Gandhi thought and worked on similar lines. Those who are sincerely desirous of inheriting the revolutionary and progressive side of religion should discard the medieval outlook and unreservedly and unhesitatingly own and espouse the cause of secularism and democracy. Otherwise by clinging to the ideal of a religious State they will be willy nilly playing in the hands of mullahs and bigots. That is what has unfortunately happened in Pakistan.

Quaide-Azam Jinnah's declaration on the eve of the birth of Pakistan that in the new State "Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims in the political sense as citizens of the State" should have stopped all talk of two-nation theory and the establishment of a Muslim State. But that did not happen. Muslim League leaders continued to harp on the old tune thinking that by doing so they would keep the fanaticism of their culturally backward co-religionists under control. But fanaticism feeds and fattens on encouragement. Its demands are endless.

When the report of the Basic Principles Committee was published the religion-ridden and other bigoted Muslims of Pakistan felt jubilant at their success in having installed reaction on crest of politics in their country and also for having deprived non-Muslims of the fundamental right to get elected to the highest office in the State. Thus emboldened the reactionaries headed by mullahs started a campaign that the Ahmadis should also be declared as non-Muslims and therefore a minority in Pakistan. That is an old demand of the orthodox mullahs. What is the sin that the Ahmadis have committed to deserve this punishment ? They call themselves Muslims and have faith in the Quran, the Sunnah and the Prophet. Only they hold that every age has its prophets and do not believe in the tenet that Moham-

med was the last prophet that God had deputed for mankind. It is not for me to say what is right and what is wrong about this belief. But there can be no two opinions that in a democratic state every one has the right to believe in what he thinks true and proper. But for the triumphant mullahs and their violent followers it was enough to kick up trouble. In the beginning of 1953 an anti-Ahmadi agitation gained momentum and assumed gigantic proportions within weeks.

Having yielded before Mullahism while framing the Basic Principles Committee's Report it became difficult for the Nazim-ud-Din Government to discountenance, much less suppress, this dangerous, vicious and anti-democratic agitation. Indeed, some responsible League leaders only fanned the flames of fanaticism by vehemently supporting the principle that "Mohammed is the last prophet" and any one who did not subscribe to this view could not claim to be a Muslim. Not even one member of the ruling party had the courage to announce publicly that it was the birth right of everyone, including a Muslim, to disagree with any belief however sacred in the eyes of the Muslims. "Politicians were playing with fire", stated Anwar Ali, Inspector-General of Police in West Punjab before the Court of Inquiry, "by arousing religious feelings of a fanatical population. All political parties, including the Muslim League, tried to make political capital out of the situation. No politician had the strength to say that the (public) demands were unreasonable; on the other hand they all placed themselves on the crest of an agitational wave. Politicians in this country do not consider any weapon too low". It is no wonder that the agitation took a most virulent and violent form. What carnage, what holocausts, and what destruction was wrought in the name of Islam in West Pakistan especially in the Punjab during those dark and terrible days of March and April. Hundreds of Ahmadis were looted, dozens of their villages were burnt, men and women were roasted alive and thousands were rendered homeless. There was a reign of terror for this small Muslim community. "What happened in Lahore and elsewhere in the Punjab should make us hang our heads down in shame", confessed Ghulam Mohammed, Governor-General of Pakistan.

Ultimately when the civil administration failed to deal with the disturbances Nazim-ud-Din Government was obliged to hand over the area to the army and impose martial law on it to restore normalcy.

Just as the followers of Jan Sangh, Mahasabha and other Hindu communal parties think that by adoption of a secular constitution for the country a great boon has been conferred on the Muslims in India, similarly there is a wide-spread belief in Pakistan that by becoming non-communal in their outlook Pakistani Muslims would be putting their Hindu compatriots under great obligation. That is an unwarranted attitude. Secularism is primarily in the interests of all people and the majority community benefits from it the most. Without secularism democracy cannot flourish in modern times. The absence of secularism might harm the religious minorities first of all but it will not take long before, one after the other, different sections of the majority also fall prey to fanaticism and bigotry in the country. Many Pakistanis have now learned that lesson as a result of recent bitter experience. Had the Pakistan Government committed the fatal mistake of yielding before the anti-Ahmadi agitation fanatics would have demanded exclusion of other sections from the fold of Islam, till at last none but fanatics would be counted as Muslims. That would be the sure path to ruin and annihilation. The danger has not wholly vanished yet. So long as the idea of building a religious State is not totally abandoned the possibility of fanaticism raising its evil head will remain. It is for lovers of democracy to be fully warned about it.

This so far as the basic principles of the Pakistan Constitution are concerned. Has the country made any progress in other spheres ?

Six years ago, when the subcontinent became independent on August 15, 1947, both India and Pakistan adopted the Government of India Act 1935 as the provisional constitution till the two constituent assemblies were able to frame new free constitutions in accordance with the genius of their respective people. Congress leaders in India have given a constitution, good or bad, to their countrymen.. They have also held

the first general elections under its provisions and chosen the first parliament. It is certainly creditable that they did it promptly. What have the Muslim League leaders of Pakistan achieved ? Even an agreement on all basic principles of the constitution is nowhere in sight and the people are practically where they were six years ago. Leaders of all political parties including the Muslim League were unanimous in declaring that the Government of India Act 1935 was a charter of slavery for the people of the subcontinent. And it is this charter which still holds sway in Pakistan. Constitutionally people cannot claim to enjoy any fundamental human or political rights. The executive can function as irresponsibly, or even worse, as it used to do during the days of British Imperialism.

Deplorable restrictions on civil liberties exist in Pakistan. There are Public Security Acts and other laws granting extraordinary powers to the executive to curb the freedom of a citizen. There was bewilderment all over Pakistan when in October 1949 the Central Government promulgated the Pakistan Public Safety Ordinance giving the executive authorities powers of preventive detention of persons and control of non-official organisations and associations. It also contained provisions for control of the Press and over the starting of new papers. This Ordinance was rightly opposed by all lovers of freedom. Criticising the measure in a joint statement some members of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly observed :

> "It is an occasion for consternation and regret that the Pakistan Government should have deemed it necessary at this juncture to pass, an ordinance suppressing the freedom of the Press, speech and political development.
>
> That an important measure of this nature should have been enacted without consulting the elected representatives of the people has come to us a great surprise, especially from a Government which claims to have its authority from the people, and which proclaims itself to behave in consonance with public opinion.
>
> No emergency exists today which justifies enactment of war-time legislation. It is usual for Government to restore civil liberties, curtailment of which may have been justified during war-time.
>
> There are already Acts existing in the provinces for repeal of which there is public demand. It was hoped that civil liberties would be restored but instead the country has been subjected to a fascist measure which will

spread panic and fear in the minds of every one. The people of West Punjab who fought against this very legislation had a special reason to resent the existence of the Provincial Act, and will now be shocked at its sanctification by the Pakistan Government in the shape of the new Central Ordinance.

To the people of West Punjab the struggle against the Safety Act and the fight for freedom has become synonymous, and this relapse into the traditions of slavery is reminiscent of the dark days of the Unionists and a betrayal of the ideals embodied in the demand for Pakistan.

This complete suppression of the right of free speech, association and elementary civic rights prevents even the formation of a political opposition party, which is considered to be essential for successful working of a democratic government.

It is sad commentary on the popular character and self-confidence of a national government that it would find even the notorious and repressive laws of an alien Government insufficient to govern its own people. Many who fought for the success of the Muslim League Party have further reasons to pause and think. Are civil liberties and the people's interest safe in the hands of men whom the Muslim League has put in power ?"

There has been no democratisation of the political structure in the native States of Pakistan. Some half-hearted reforms have been introduced no doubt in them but the Princely order stands in tact and the rulers enjoy the supreme powers over their people as before; their privy purses remain untouched.

The economic and financial conditions in Pakistan during the first four years of its existence were doubtless satisfactory. But gone are the days when *The Economist*, London, said in April 1950, that "Pakistan since its inception in 1947 has had an extraordinary run of good luck economically." One wonders when will the reviewer be able to observe again that "in a world where Governments grab more and more of the fruits of their people's labours, it is refreshing, indeed astonishing, to find a country which can budget to cover increased expenditure and yet cut down taxation". In 1953 Pakistan had to impose all conceivable taxes to make good the deficit of more than 30 crores of rupees and balance its budget.

The feudal institutions of *jagirdari* and absentee landlordism which have enslaved millions of toiling people continue to exist in Pakistan. The Muslim League had promised to abolish

these anachronic systems but under one pretext or the other the implementation of it is delayed. Some petty agrarian reforms introduced by the provincial governments are made to appear as great revolutionary changes. But the fact remains that absentee landlordism thrives in Pakistan and independence has made little change in the miserable lot of the agricultural labourer.

Nor is this all. West Punjab was considered to be the granary of the subcontinent and only a couple of years ago Pakistan was offering her surplus grain to India and other countries in need of them. Today Pakistan has become a deficit country suffering from shortage of food stuffs and had last year to beg America to send her 1.5 million tons of wheat to meet her needs. Whether natural calamities such as drought and scarcity of water are partly responsible for this deficit or it is the sole outcome of the inefficiency and bungling of the administrators it is difficult to state. But that the food situation in particular and economic conditions in general have lately deteriorated in that country nobody can deny.

Pakistan was born on August 14, 1947. During these six years the leaders of the Muslim League have been endeavouring to build a State on the principles of Islamic Democracy. Like all demagogues they have been putting everything that is noble and high in human culture into this conception in the course of their statements, utterances and pronouncements. But what they have actually been able to achieve is nothing better than what Congressmen have shown in India. "Today Pakistan's prestige in the world is at its lowest", observed the *Dawn* of Karachi, then mouthpiece of the Muslim League, on June 15, 1953, "and let there be no mistake about it. Our diplomats abroad and those who find themselves travelling in foreign countries are most uncomfortably on the defensive. Those who do not like us or are hostile to us are gloating and this was only to be expected. But we have many friends in many lands and their attitude today is one of anxious sympathy which often borders on pity. Politeness may forbid a frank expression of that attitude but one cannot help sensing what it is. Summed

up that attitude is something like this: 'These unfortunate Pakistanis are facing a lot of trouble. They are finding it hard to run their young country and are falling apart. There is nothing much we can do to help them in their internal troubles but we should not make things harder for them'. This is what we have made of 'the fifth largest State in the world' and 'the world's greatest Islamic State'."

To religion-ridden fanatics among the Kashmir Muslims, whose number is not small, these sombre realities in Pakistan might be of no weight while the accession issue is under consideration but to progressive and political workers fighting for freedom and democracy these developments are perturbing.

The deplorable events in the beginning of this year in Pakistan have disheartened and even terrified the patriots in the State. If Muslims can be looted, killed and roasted alive for mere difference of opinion in a Muslim State it is not difficult to imagine what must be the condition of the followers of other religions and what may not befall free thinkers, materialists and atheists? Kashmir culture as evolved throughout ages primarily stands for tolerance and freedom of thought; it is the pivot on which it rests. If Kashmir joins Pakistan what guarantee is there that our culture will remain unimpaired and will be allowed to develop smoothly? What assurance is there that we can march unobstructed towards the goal of freedom?

But the outbreak of fanaticism in Pakistan did not only force the Kashmir patriots to review their opinion about State's accession to that country; it served as a serious challenge to the progressive elements in Pakistan which they could ignore at great peril. The challenge was accepted and met in a manner which has surprised the world, friends of Pakistan no less than her enemies.

On April 14, 1953 Ghulam Mohammed, Governor-General of Pakistan, dismissed Nazim-ud-Din Cabinet and appointed Mohammed Ali as the new Prime Minister. It was so unexpected that everyone outside that country was agreeably bewildered. But as subsequent events have shown it was a bold

act of statesmanship. "I have watched with growing uneasiness," declared the Governor-General, "the exceedingly difficult conditions with which Pakistan is faced. There is the very grave food situation. The general economic outlook presents several features which must be dealt with vigorously. The law and order situation needs firm handling. There has been most serious criticism of Government measures and even more of lack of measures to meet the situation. I have been driven to the conclusion that the Cabinet of Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din has proved entirely inadequate to grapple with the difficulties facing the country".

Nazim-ud-Din's dismissal implied more than the replacement of one Prime Minister by another. In the circumstances in which Pakistan was placed in April 1953 it meant a severe blow at the faction in the Muslim League which encouraged mullahism. It was bold assertion of the progressive wing of the Party to take the reins of politics in their own hands. The question was whom would the country support ? As the subsequent events proved the summary dismissal of Nazim-ud-Din Cabinet was justified constitutionally as well as democratically. The Governor-General's action was supported by most of the prominent leaders of the country. Mohammed Ali, the new Prime Minister, was hailed as the best man to cope with the dangerous situation which had been created by the ill-conceived policy of Nazim-ud-Din. All the popular organisations including the Muslim League of which Nazim-ud-Din was still the titular head promised support and co-operation. In Bengal, the home town of the dismissed Prime Minister, Mohammed Ali was received as a triumphant hero. On his dismissal Nazim-ud-Din posed as a defender of democracy and constitution. He threatened to take his case before the Constituent Assembly. But within a few days the people of Pakistan gave him the answer by hailing Mohammed Ali as the rising star of the nation. Nazim-ud-Din was isolated and eclipsed.

It was evident that the Governor-General did not act in any haste. He must have been watching with distress the political and economic situation in the country growing from bad to worse. He must have been feeling the pulse of the nation and making a

note of the perturbation among the progressive and patriotic sections in Pakistan. He rose equal to the occasion and acted boldly when he should have done so. Any more delay would have surely proved ruinous.

Mohammed Ali is known to be a man of modern education with liberal views. He was never an enthusiastic member of Muslim League and did not have any sympathy with communal politics in the past. He distinguished himself as a man having large-heartedness and breadth of vision as the Finance Minister of Bengal at the time of the partition. On becoming Prime Minister of Pakistan he made heartlifting pronouncements. "The most important task facing the country today is", declared Mohammed Ali in his first broadcast speech from Radio Pakistan, "to reassert the ideals of unity and solidarity on which Pakistan was founded.Dissensions, disharmony, provincialism and intolerance must end......Democracy must function effectively in the country". In the Press interview which he gave immediately after he assumed office he outlined the policy he proposed to follow. At home he would discourage extremist views on religious matters and concentrate all the efforts of the Government to improve the economic conditions to meet the threat of famine. "We cannot have a theocratic system", declared the Prime Minister addressing the members of the Commonwealth Correspondents Association in London on June 8, "because Islam is opposed to priestcraft. It is our intention to keep politics free from intrusions of priest". The general impression in Pakistan was that only bigoted mullahs and fanatics under their influence were dissatisfied with and afraid of the new Prime Minister.

We have seen that the insistence of practically all Muslim leaders of Pakistan on the establishment of a Muslim State proved to be the root cause of the trouble that brought the country into a very perilous position. The undemocratic recommendations of the Basic Principles Committee gave a handle to the priesthood and religious fanatics to be aggressive and invoke all the forces of evil to their aid. Mohammed Ali expressed his scepticism about the concept of an Islamic State.

Speaking to Pressmen in Calcutta on his way to Dacca he confessed ignorance about what the people meant by an Islamic State. As for himself he declared his faith in Islamic social justic and democracy as enunciated by Jinnah. And we know that Qaide-Azam has instructed Pakistanis to keep this fundamental principle before them that they "are all citizens and equal citizens of one State" and that "in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims in the political sense as citizens of the State".

The new Prime Minister was not alone in entertaining this scepticism about the establishment of an Islamic State. "The purpose for which Pakistan was established", said Governor-General Ghulam Mohammed, in a speech at Abbotabad on May 13, 1953 only one month after the historic change in Pakistan Government, "was to sweep away the dust which had accumulated through misunderstandings and misinterpretations and to bring out the lusture of democracy, shall I say Islamic democracy, for the service of the people". The Governor-General added : "We have faith in equality of opportunities and equal status of all human beings without distinction of colour, creed or caste. We stand for the freedom of mankind, freedom of thought, freedom of speech".

The new interpretation of Islamic social justice and democracy could be surmised from the inclusion in the Mohammed Ali Cabinet of a comparatively unknown figure in politics, A.K. Brohi, who was working as the Advocate-General of Sind. This was the most significant appointment and inspired hope that in future reason and tolerance would triumph over fanaticism and religious bigotry in Pakistani public life. Brohi is a scholar and holds the scientific view that the social justice, democracy and cultural attainments of Islam are not to be found in the holy scripture but in the rationalist and scientific teachings of Muslim philosophers who were the fore-runners of European Renaissance. Brohi provoked the ire of mullahs and other religion-ridden Muslims in 1952 when he challenged them to show a single passage in the Quran which could be included in the constitution of a modern democratic State. It was not

without some significance that Brohi was given the portfolios of law and minorities.

Ousted from Government Nazim-ud-Din made an attempt to utilize the Muslim League organisation of which he was the president to defeat his opponents. But in this he failed as his own nominees refused to accept the membership of the Working Committee so long as he remained the president. There was no alternative for him but to resign and go into wilderness. Subsequently Mohammed Ali was elected as the head of the League organisation.

Having achieved success in the initial stages of the peaceful revolution which they had jointly planned and started it was permissible to hope that Ghulam Mohammed and Mohammed Ali would tackle all problems wisely. The first thing needed to bring politics on progressive lines was to convert the Muslim League into the Democratic League of Pakistan so that not only Muslims but also all other people of the country to whatever faith or ideology they belonged could become members of the organisation. Earnest endeavours should have been made to secularise politics and separate it from religion. The inclusion of Brohi in the new Cabinet raised the expectation that the report of the Basic Principles Committee submitted to the Constituent Assembly in December 1952 which encouraged the religious fanatics would be scrapped and a new document based on rational and realistic principles would be prepared to take its place. It was reported that the Governor-General did advise the Prime Minister that the country should be given an interim democratic constitution without any further delay. It was said the new draft would not insist on the retention of the goal of Islamic State but would define it as a democratic republic of Pakistan. Had that been done the triumph of liberals and modern-minded Muslims and the defeat of mullahs would have been complete. It would have also proved reassuring to the minorities. It would have ushered in an era of progress and prosperity in Pakistan.

But mullahs and reactionary politicians did not remain inactive. It is true that the Governor-General's sudden, swift and strong action to stem the tide of religious fanaticism and

to bring liberal-minded politicians with modern outlook to the fore-front was generally supported by the people of Pakistan; but it did not annihilate the enemies of progress. Indeed, the latter became alert and were prompted to form a united front. They strongly opposed the idea of an interim constitution and insisted that the report of the Basic Principles Committee should be accepted. In a joint statement issued on September 26, 1953 Syed Suleman Nadvi, President, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam, Pakistan, Mohammed Hashim Gazdar, Deputy President, Constituent Assembly, Mufti Mohammed Shafi of Taalimat-e-Islamia, Hussain Imam, Sharif-ud-Din, President, Karachi Bar Association and Sultan Ahmed, Ameer, Jamaat-e-Islami, "warned the authorities in unequivocal terms that exclusion of any portion of the B. P. C. Report or Ulema's amendments having a bearing on the holy Quran and Sunnah will under no circumstances be tolerated". The Ulema's threat did not go in vain. For, when the Pakistan Constituent Assembly met in November 1953, the Government did not have the courage to introduce the proposed interim Constitution. Thus the revolution stopped half-way. It was decided by the Constituent Assembly that the name of the State should be the "Islamic Republic of Pakistan". The clause in the B. P. C. Report recommending the constitution of the Board of five Ulema's to scrutinise all Bills passed by the Parliament was rejected but it was decided that "no legislature should enact any law repugnant to the holy Quran and Sunnah". The Supreme Court was authorised to judge if the laws were valid. Any one can challenge the validity of the laws on ground of repugnancy and it will be for the Supreme Court to give its verdict.

B. C. Nandy, a member of the Constituent Assembly, protested that the provision was unworkable. He pointed out: "A stage might come when a legislative measure to protect the Hindu temples might be moved in the House. This might be interpreted as not quite in conformity with the Quranic principles and the orthodox sections might argue that such a measure amounted to protection of idol worship". This argument did not appeal to the Muslim members of the

Assembly and the clause was adopted.

But the rulers of Pakistan themselves appear to cherish the fear that they are leaping in the dark. The draft constitution admits that the Quran and Sunnah are interpreted differently by different Islamic sects. It will therefore not be an easy job for the Supreme Court to accept an interpretation to test repugnancy. In modern State laws must be clear and specific. But here is an element of indefiniteness which will make confusion worse confounded. An amendment has been accepted to the clause describing the new State as "the Islamic Republic of Pakistan" saying that this would remain in force for 25 years after which it would be reviewed in the light of experience gained and the conditions then prevailing. Another amendment exempts for a period of 25 years all monetary and fiscal measures from the constitutional provision that no legislature should enact any law repugnant to Quran and Sunnah. The exemption applies to all laws affecting the existing economic, financial and credit system such as banking, insurance, provident fund, loans and other similar matters. This is a confession that modern finance and banking cannot be conducted on the basis of the injunctions of Quran and the Sunnah which ban payment and acceptance of interest. It is a pity that the leaders did not display the same courage in confessing that Islam cannot, as no other religion can, be a safe guide in many political, economic and social matters in the twentieth century. It is a pity that the eighty million people of Pakistan shall have to undergo several trials and tribulations to arrive at this truth during the coming 25 years.

According to another resolution adopted by the Constituent Assembly an organisation is to be set up by the State in Pakistan which will make known the principles of Islam to the people. The Hindu members complained that such an organisation was tantamount to conversion of non-Muslims and it was against the fundamental rights of minorities approved by the Assembly. They desired that the activities of the organisation should be confined to the Muslims. But this request was rejected. In these circumstances the non-Muslims are jus-

tified in being afraid that the organisation would degenerate into a State sponsored proselytising mission.

Before the subcontinent was partitioned and when the British were still the rulers of the country Muslim League leaders denounced the system of joint electorates and were keen to have separate electorates for elections to the legislature both provincial and central. Knowing the communal outlook of the Hindus they were probably not unjustified in it. But to persist in the demand even when Muslims are, besides being the rulers, in an overwhelming majority in Pakistan, betokens utter lack of self-confidence. Communal electorates are a vicious system which divide man from man and can never allow the common bond of citizenship to grow among the people. It is really amazing that while Hindus, a minority in Pakistan, should demand joint electorates the leaders of the majorty community should reject the same. "Hindus who want to stay as loyal Pakistanis," observed H.S. Suhrawardy, chief of Awami League, on October 7, 1953, "and work for the progress of the country in co-operation with the Muslims, are being driven away and denied that right by the creation of separate electorates for them". Rightly did B.K. Dutta of East Bengal declare in the Constituent Assembly session on October 7, 1953 that "minorities in Pakistan were being treated as stateless people".

No wonder in this wave of triumphant reaction the Constituent Assembly adopted the clause laying down that the head of the State should be a Muslim. Defending the provision in his monthly broadcast speech on December 1, 1953, Mohammed Ali, Prime Minister, said that he doubted "whether in fact it implied any substantial inability for the minority communites, because real power under the new Constitution would vest not in the hands of the Head of the State but in the central and provincial Cabinets". If so it was evidently senseless to insist that the Head should be a Muslim. Under the prevailing communal mentality in the country there was little chance for a non-Muslim to become the Head of State. But even if he would have been elected to that august position by some miracle he, being powerless, could harm nobody.

Notwithstanding the strong communal leanings in the administrative policy of the Congress Government in India it cannot be denied that certain key posts of Provincial Governors, Cabinet Ministers, Ambassadors and Secretaries to the Government are held by non-Hindus particularly Muslims. But in Pakistan no Hindu is either a Governor, a Minister of the Central Cabinet, Secretary to the Government or an Ambassador in a foreign country. In the provincial governments too with the exception of a Harijan Minister in East Bengal all others are Muslim. The same is the case with the departmental heads and other responsible posts. This does not prove that non-Muslims are receiving equal treatment with the Muslims in every respect in Pakistan.

That the Mohammed Ali Government has not been able to pursue its revolutionary programme is the disappointment of its friends and well-wishers all over the world. Under its guidance the Constituent Assembly has no doubt improved upon and amended the recommendations contained in the B. P. C. Report. But the steps taken to appease the mullahs and other religion-ridden sections of the people can only thwart the progress of the nation and disallow it to grow as a free, democratic and prosperous people. Non-Muslims cannot remain satisfied and contented under the proposed Constitution. "Certainly it is for Pakistanis themselves to draw up their Constitution as they please", observed the liberal *Manchester Guardian* on November 20, 1953, "but so far as they really seek to base it on Islamic law, this must accentuate the differences between the Muslim majority and the minorities. Such a Constitution, says their critic Mr. Nehru, creates at least two grades of citizenship, one having more opportunities and the other less. Mr. Nehru's remarks may seem impertinent to Pakistanis but are they not true ?"

It is not only the non-Muslims who have deplored the adoption of these clauses by the Pakistan Constituent Assembly. Freedom-loving, experienced and far-sighted Muslim statesmen and publicists all over the world have viewed them in the same light. On November 10, 1953 Kasim Gulek, Secretary-General of

Peoples Republican Party of Turkey, commenting on these developments said :

"Pakistan is trying what we tried for 590 years and gave up. Indeed, we were more than an Islamic State. Our Caliph used to be the Caliph of Muslims throughout the world. But we gave that up to become a modern, secular, go-ahead State.

As a religious State Pakistan has no place in modern world; I wonder where Pakistan leaders will draw the line. If they adhere scrupulously to Islamic principles, they shall have to ban usury, shut their banks, stone adulterers to death and cut off thieves' right hands. If they did draw the line somewhere Pakistan will cease to be an Islamic State".

Another Turkish leader Nejmi Atesh said :

"It is a pity that the Quran, whose main purpose is to guide religious behaviour, is being made a basis for political life. This is an act of injustice to the Muslims of Pakistan. In an Islamic Republic, surrounded by religious dogma their scope for progress will be restricted. I hope that greater sense will prevail and that Pakistanis will keep religion where it belongs —in the mosque".

A leading public organ in another Muslim country, *The Times of Indonesia*, after describing Pakistan's action as "unhappy and unwise" wrote :

"The picture that emerges is far from generous, inspiring or progressive. Pakistan that votes in U.N. General Assembly against Dr. Malan's South Africa believes that it has covered itself using the word "Islam" where Dr. Malan would use "white". The result is the same—the dominance of one group over another and the political Jim Crowism, strangely out of keeping with today's Asia and in direct opposition to the promise upon which Pakistan sought birth—no majority party should impose its will upon the minority". If the Dominion of Pakistan has taken one step forward declaring its desire to metamorphose itself into a republic, it has taken three full steps back by announcing its intention to apparel itself with some vestments of a theocratic nation".

When the new Government of Mohammed Ali was installed in power it appeared almost certain that politics in Pakistan would undergo a big change. Nazim-ud-Din, the symbol of reaction and fanaticism, had not only been ousted from office of the Prime Minister he was replaced by a man with modern ideas. It was expected that Nazim-ud-Din spirit would be exorcized in all spheres and walks of public life. Big hopes were raised which yet remain unfulfilled.

Possibly the goal envisaged by Ghulam Mohammed, Governor-General and Mohammed Ali, Prime Minister, of secularising politics and building Pakistan as a modern, progressive and democratic State has not been given up. Faced with tremendous difficulties owing to the cultural backwardness of the people and the fierce opposition of the fanatical mullahs and the religion-ridden politicians they have only adopted a go-slow policy. That is the charitable view which is being taken by friends of Pakistan. Ahmed Emin Yalman, a distinguished journalist of Turkey, said on November 10, that he thought the decision of Pakistan leaders was only a "first step towards secular democracy". "We went through the same process ourselves. When Turkey broke away from the Ottomans, the Republic's new constitution described it as an "Islamic State". Later when public opinion had sufficiently matured, the Islamic label was dropped". Yalman felt that Pakistan leaders were proceeding, as Turkey's Mustaffa Kamal Ataturk had done—"achieve the secular ideal in two stages". He added : "I cannot imagine Mr. Ghulam Mohammed and Mr. Mohammed Ali as champions of theocracy". But if his hopes were misplaced then Yalman saw "great harm in Pakistan heading towards theocracy—harm not only for Pakistan, but also for India, in fact for the whole of Asia and the Middle East".

Time alone will show what is in store for the common man in Pakistan under the new dispensation. It is too early to pass any final verdict. For the present an impartial critic can only say this much that if Pakistan becomes genuinely secular and adopts modern social democracy as its goal it can free the teeming toiling millions of the country; otherwise not. Meanwhile the recent events have not made it easy for the fighters for freedom in Kashmir to decide what attitude they should adopt in the impending plebiscite if and when it is held.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

A STILL-BORN AZAD KASHMIR

ADOPTION of anti-democratic clauses by the Constituent Assembly while framing a constitution for Pakistan and other illiberal tendencies so clear in political, economic and social life of that country are not the only ill omens that have made it difficult for the people of Kashmir to unhesitatingly declare their choice for accession; the quarrels of the Muslim Conference leaders over sharing of power in Azad Kashmir and the despotic manner in which the Pakistan authorities have handled the situation and tried to smother the democratic movement in that area have also disheartened them. The sad story of Azad Kashmir makes a very painful reading indeed.

By the end of September 1947 it became clear that Maharaja Hari Singh had decided behind the back of the State people to accede to India and that he was only biding the time to make a formal announcement. The general amnesty that was granted to the Nationalist political prisoners and the confabulations held by the Maharaja's emissaries with Abdullah in the Bhadrawah Sub-Jail and the Badami Bagh Cantonment before his release left no doubt about the future of the State. The Socialists as well as the leaders of the Muslim Conference still out of prison were deeply perturbed but could not decide what to do. Then suddenly light came to them from Junagadh, a small State in Kathiawar.

In September 1947 the Nawab of Junagadh decided to accede to Pakistan and the Governor-General of the new-born Dominion accepted the proposal. The population of Junagadh is overwhelmingly (80%) Hindu and the State is surrounded by the Indian territory. It was wrong in principle and certainly anti-democratic on the part of the Nawab to have made this decision without ascertaining the will of the State people; it

was equally objectionable for the Governor-General of Pakistan to have agreed to the proposal and signed the Instrument of Accession. No sooner was the decision of the ruler made public there was wild indignation all over India and the State people rose in rebellion. On October 1, 1947 the local Congress leaders repudiated the agreement, disowned the Nawab and formed a provisional revolutionary government of their own to replace the Government of the autocratic ruler.

Getting a cue from the Congressmen of Junagadh some of the patriotic but timid Muslim Conference workers of Kashmir met on October 3, 1947 in the Paris Hotel at Rawalpindi and decided to form a provisional revolutionary government on the Junagadh model. A proclamation was drafted, adopted and issued to the Press. "Maharaja Hari Singh's title to rule", said the proclamation, "has come to an end from August 15, 1947 and he has no constitutional or moral right to rule over the people of Kashmir against their will. He is consequently deposed with effect from October 4, 1947. All the Ministers and officials of the State will henceforth be duty bound to carry out the orders and instructions of the Provisional Government. Anyone disobeying this duly constituted Government of the people of Kashmir or in anyway aiding or abetting the ex-Maharaja in his usurpation of the rule of Kashmir will be guilty of an act of high treason and will be dealt with accordingly".[1] The headquarters of the Provisional Government were, it was declared, established at Muzaffarabad. This historic announcement was broadcast from the Radio Pakistan and was received enthusiastically by the people of Kashmir.

It is rather difficult to be sure about the identity of all the members of the Provisional Government as they either lacked courage or for some obscure reasons did not give out their real names while issuing the proclamation to the Press. Probably they were sceptical about the fate of their adventure. They hardly believed that their dream would soon be translated into reality.

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[1] The *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, dated October 7, 1947. The *Light*, Lahore, of October 8, 1947.

A STILL-BORN AZAD KASHMIR

The president of the Provisional Government as announced by Radio Pakistan was Anwar. Who is this Anwar ? Three men have come forward since each claiming that it is he. But it is believed by reliable people that Anwar was no other person than Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, a member of the working committee of the Muslim Conference, one of the old veterans of the Kashmir Freedom Movement who headed the provisional revolutionary Government of Azad Kashmir. Other members according to the same source were :

1.	Sardar Mohammed Ibrahim	Prime Minister
2.	Ghulam Haider Jandalvi	Defence Minister
3.	Nazir Hussain Shah	Finance Minister
4.	Mr. Alim (assumed name)	Education Minister
5.	Mr. Luqman (assumed name)	Health Minister
6.	Mr. Karkhanah (assumed name)	Industries Minister
7.	Mr. Fahim (assumed name)	Agriculture Minister

No sooner was the Provisional Government formed than its president did a childish and fantastic thing. He proceeded to Srinagar with the intention of arresting the Maharaja and warning Abdullah of the dangerous consequences of his contemplated step in forcing the State to accede to India. In the Valley dramatic changes were taking place in political life. Before Gilkar could even see the Maharaja the Kashmir War broke out and the head of the Provisional Government could not return to his headquarters. Subsequently he was, amusingly enough, arrested in December and detained in prison by the Nationalist Government but without knowing that he was the first head of the Azad Kashmir Government. Gilkar did meet Abdullah in Srinagar before his detention and had a talk with him but he did not reveal his identity.

The first attempt to establish a Provisional Government of Azad Kashmir having proved abortive Sardar Mohammed Ibrahim Khan, another leader of the Muslim Conference, in co-operation with some of his trusted colleagues formed a new Government on October 24. The time for doing so was more propitious as the Maharaja's Government had launched an attack on the Freedom Movement by starting the wholesale arrests of

patriots in the Valley two days previously. A high wave of resentment had swept over the country and every Muslim in Pakistan wanted to help their brethren in the State. In his endeavours Ibrahim received unstinted support from officials and non-officials alike in Rawalpindi where many Kashmiris had gathered to raise the banner of revolt against the Dogra Maharaja for his perfidy. Ibrahim's team was more daring and infused with a spirit of revolutionary adventure. Nevertheless many leaders of the Muslim Conference were still not without misgivings about the future of this move. Ibrahim offered the presidentship of the new Provisional Government to Chaudhri Hamid Ullah, the acting President of the Muslim Conference, but the latter declined thinking that it would never develop into anything real and would end as a farce as soon as the impending plebiscite (which India had promised to hold) was held to decide the accession issue. Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah, who was at Rawalpindi at the time, was approached and asked to join the Cabinet but he too refused, saying that the existence of his family, which was in Srinagar, would be endangered. Finally Ibrahim announced the new Government as follows:

1.	Sardar Mohammed Ibrahim	President.
2.	Sayid Ali Ahmed Shah	Minister.
3.	Chaudhri Abdullah Khan Bhalli	Minister.
4.	Khwaja Ghulam Din Wani	Minister.
5.	Sayid Nazir Hussain Shah	Minister.
6.	Mr. Sanna Ullah Shah	Minister.

Compared with Gilkar's Cabinet the new Government was composed of serious, sober and bold men. They issued a policy statement, which, drafted in the surcharged atmosphere of the time when men's minds had run amuck by communal fanaticism and religious bigotry, is creditable to their statesmanship and speaks well of their sense of patriotism. "The Provisional Azad Kashmir Government", declared the statement "which the people of Jammu and Kashmir have set up a few weeks ago with the object of ending intolerable Dogra tyrannies and securing to the people of the State, including Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs the right of free self-government, has now established its rule

and hopes to liberate the remaining pockets of Dogra rule very soon. The new Government represents the united will of Jammu and Kashmir State to be free from the rule of Dogra dynasty which has long suppressed and oppressed the people".[1] The statement briefly described the acts of suppression by the Dogra rulers in the Valley and the rise of patriotic forces against them. It affirmed: "The united will of the people has, however, overcome the organised violence of the ruler's armies. He and his so-called Prime Minister have fled from Kashmir and will perhaps soon flee from Jammu as well". Though belonging to Muslim Conference and espousing the League ideology based on two-nation theory the leaders of the Ibrahim Government preached communal harmony and advocated composite nationalism. Giving an inkling into the future political set-up as they visualised it the statement declared :

> "The Provisional Government which is assuming the administration of the State is most emphatically not a communal government. It will include Muslims as well as non-Muslims in the Cabinet; it will serve the people, exist for the temporary purpose of restoring law and order in the State and enable the people to elect by their free vote a popular legislature and a popular government".

Like all patriots and freedom-lovers of Kashmir the new Provisional Government laid down its policy towards India and Pakistan in clear terms. The statement proceeded :

> "The Provisional Government entertain sentiments of the most friendliness and goodwill towards its neighbouring dominions of India and Pakistan and hopes that both the dominions will sympathise with the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their efforts to exercise their birthright of political freedom. The Provisional Government is further anxious to safeguard the identity of Jammu and Kashmir as a political entity".

The views of the leaders of the new Government about the disputed matter of accession were quite in conformity with the principles of democracy. The statement ended :

> "The question of accession of Jammu and Kashmir to either dominion can only be decided by the free vote of the people in the form of a referendum. The Provisional Government will make prompt arrangements for this and hopes to invite independent observers to see that the question is decided by the free will of the people".

[1] *The Civil and Military Gazette*, dated October 29, 1947.

Not only the Muslims but also the progressives among the non-Muslim communities in the State heartily welcomed this declaration of policy on behalf of the Provisional Government as it was in full accord with the fundamental principles on which the Kashmir Freedom Movement was based. Having started well the Ibrahim Cabinet firmly grappled with the innumerable problems which faced it. The Government had started with a scratch. No one among the members had any experience of administration and they did not inherit any civil service. They had no offices, no records and not even a type writer to carry on the work of the Government. But almost in a miraculous manner within a few weeks the revolutionists established a Secretariat in Chadda Buildings at Rawalpindi. They raised a huge army of the demobilised war veterans in Poonch and Mirpur. Tribesmen had already entered the State and the fighting was in progress. The Provisional Government despatched regular forces to the front and their officers tried not only to conduct the warfare on modern scientific lines but also to check the tribesmen from resorting to depredations and vandalism. Many Kashmiris from the Valley left their homes, went to Rawalpindi and joined the Azad Forces to fight on the side of the Provisional Government. Among those who were killed on the front was Azad Kamal, a prominent worker of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference who was temperamentally opposed to communalism, religious bigotry and the two-nation theory of the Muslim League.

Even before the Provisional Government had been formed the people of Gilgit and Skardu had risen in revolt against the Dogra rule. They had vanquished the Maharaja's armies stationed in the frontier, arrested their commander, Brigadier Ghansar Singh, and declared their intention of joining Pakistan. The Government of the N.W.F.P. had therefore assumed the responsibility of administering that part of the State. Subsequently the Central Government of Pakistan took over the charge; stationed its own armies in the area and has been since directly dealing with it. Owing to the reasons that will be presently manifest the frontier areas could never come under the jurisdic-

tion of the Provisional Government. But at places the forces of the Ibrahim Government were successful in pushing back the Maharaja's armies and the Indian troops; those areas became the territories of the Provisional Government and came to be known as Azad Kashmir.

The Kashmir dispute was taken to the Security Council early in 1948. The Provisional Government considered it advisable that Ibrahim, head of Azad Kashmir, should be present at Lake Success and try to submit facts of the case and the views of the State people to the members of the august body. Accompanied by M. D. Taseer, his adviser-in-chief, Ibrahim went to America. The Security Council did not recognise the existence of the Azad Kashmir Government but the romance of the revolutionary movement caught the imagination of the people in the New World whose ancestors had themselves fought similar wars of liberation and Ibrahim got wide publicity. So when he returned to Pakistan he received a tremendous ovation from the people. Wherever he went he was lionised as the hero of the Kashmir saga.

By the end of April 1948 Azad Kashmir and its Government had become a reality. Every one was anxious to poke his nose into it. The officials in Rawalpindi, particularly the Commissioner, who had helped the Provisional Government in several ways, thought that he had the right to dictate as to how and on what lines the liberation movement should be run. The Pakistan Government was formulating its own plans to conduct the movement and despatch armies to occupy the areas liberated by the Azad Forces. And worse of all the Muslim Conference leaders who had been indifferent, if not hostile, towards the Provisional Government in the beginning now began to aspire to share power. It was not possible for the young, inexperienced and resourceless members of the Government to withstand these pressures from all sides. Besides, they were distracted by the disturbed conditions in every inch of the area under their control as a result of the war. On his return from Lake Success therefore Ibrahim was confronted with almost insuperable difficulties which could tax the patience of the most patient

among the Kashmir leaders. He was out of touch with his people and therefore did not possess the confidence and strength, the two main bulwarks on which a popular leader can stand to resist all undue demands. Despite the formidable Azad armies and the whole-hearted support of his people he thought he was dependent on the Pakistan Government and its officials, without whose assistance he could not survive. Helplessly he adopted a policy of appeasement and submission which gradually but surely brought the movement under outside influence and ultimately proved its ruin.

Meanwhile, of the thousands of political detenus in the Maharaja's prisons Chaudhri Abbas was released from the Jammu Central Jail by the Nationalist Government on February 28, 1948 and sent to Pakistan. It was a mystifying affair. It is believed Abdullah set Abbas at liberty on the assurance that the latter would persuade Jinnah to accept a proposal for an independent Kashmir. Abbas is reported to have attempted to fulfil this promise but he failed in his mission. Probably nothing better could be expected. Abbas was however, successful in another direction and this success was instrumental in damaging the Azad Kashmir movement beyond repair. Some uncharitable critics of Abbas hold the view that it was for this specific purpose that the Nationalist Government had freed Abbas from the Jammu Jail.

Soon after his arrival at Sialkot Abbas took over charge of the presidentship of the Muslim Conference from Chaudhri Hamid Ullah. Abbas has been a towering personality in State Muslim politics since 1931. More than for his acumen, statesmanship or wisdom he is respected for his attachment to the cause of the *Millat*. On his return from Lake Success Ibrahim in a Press conference acknowledged Abbas, by virtue of his being the top-most leader of the Muslim Conference Party, as the supreme head of the Azad Kashmir movement who could dissolve the Provisional Government and reform it as he pleased. This was in accordance with his policy of appeasement and submission but quite contrary to the principles underlying the statement issued by the Provisional Government at the time of

its formation. By yielding to the pressure of Pakistan and its officials Ibrahim had virtually destroyed the autonomy and identity of the State and now by acknowledging the president of the Muslim Conference as the supreme head of the movement he shattered its non-communal and secular character which he had emphatically declared it possessed. Unhappily this was not all. Worse things were to happen soon.

On the eve of Kashmir War Ibrahim was practically an unknown figure in State politics. No doubt, he was a member of the working committee of the Muslim Conference but he had not been in the Party for many years. He had joined it only in 1940 and had never passed through a critical period of the struggle nor had he undergone the ordeal of jail life. He was young in age being hardly 35 years old. But the formation of the rebel Government and the limelight which was focussed on him during his visit to Lake Success made him the hero of Kashmir liberation movement within a few months. It was a meteoric rise comparable only to that of Abdullah's emergence as "Lion of Kashmir" in 1931. Sudden fame is invariably accompained by jealousy, ill-will and malice on the part of less fortunate companions. Therefore when Azad Kashmir Government appeared to have become a reality and Ibrahim began to hit the headlines in the Pakistan as well as the foreign Press those leaders of the Muslim Conference who were left out of the administration or who did not care to join it at the time of the formation of the Provisional Government felt deeply envious.

On his arrival in Pakistan Abbas could not help witnessing and perhaps also envying the popularity of Ibrahim. Unhappily he considered it detrimental to his personal interests and thought of rebuilding his position which he had lost because of his absence in detention during a critical period. Those leaders of the Muslim Conference who felt disgruntled against the Azad Kashmir Government strengthened Abbas in this aim. It was difficult to know whether Abbas or Ibrahim had the backing of the people. The former had been elected as the president of the Muslim Conference in 1946. The Conference members

demanded that a new election should be held to choose the general council and the president of the Party. A memorandum signed by about two hundred workers of the Muslim Conference was presented to Abbas by Mir Abdul Aziz stressing the need for a provisional legislative assembly for Azad Kashmir. But Abbas declined either to hold the elections or to set up a legislature. His reply was that the disturbed conditions did not permit to do either. As most of the members of the general council of the Muslim Conference elected in 1946 were still in the Valley it was evident the president could wield the powers unquestioned. Thus Abbas wanted to be the sole authority without remaining responsible to any assembly of the representatives of the people. On the other hand, Ibrahim's claim to leadership rested solely on his recent fame. He did not enjoy the confidence of the people which he could do by his close contact with the Muslim Conference workers or association with the masses. For that reason he was forced to declare publicly that "Chaudhri Abbàs, president of the Muslim Conference, is the leader of us all and the Azad Kashmir Government is an off-shoot of the Muslim Conference". Ibrahim made this statement to curry favour with Abbas and his group but it did not serve that purpose.

A new organisation called the Anjuman-i-Mahajirin had been formed in 1948 to support the Azad Kashmir set-up based on the noble principles which had been enunciated in its policy statement by the second Provisional Government. Sardar Ibrahim's statement owning sepremacy of Muslim Conference was resented by all progressive and secular minded Kashmiris including the leaders of theAnjuman-i-Mahajirin. It was evident to the revolutionists that Azad Kashmir movement had ceased to be what it professed to be and was now only a tussle between two designing politicians for capture of power. Azad Kashmir had proved still-born. It was no more a democratic Government of the areas liberated from the Dogra rule but a piece of land where power hungry political workers were fighting against each other to become rulers more despotic than the hated Dogras.

The noble objective of the movement having been pushed to

the background the tussle for power came to the fore. And the powers at Karachi got the oppotunity to intervene. Had the Kashmiri leaders remained under democratic discipline, inspired confide ıce among the people and administered the Azad territories in an efficient, progressive and enlightened manner, the Pakistan Government could hardly have dared interfere with its internal affairs. But the more Abbas and Ibrahim quarrelled over spoils of power the greater opportunity Pakistan got to tighten her hold till at last, as we shall presently see, Azad Kashmir remained *Azad* only in name.

However, during 1948 to all outward appearances Abbas and Ibrahim pulled on together. Ibrahim was running the administration and Abbas was in charge of the Party organisation though the latter was also acclaimed as the supreme head of the liberation movement. In January 1949 immediately after the armed conflict came to an end by the signing of the Cease-Fire Agreement between India and Pakistan all the prominent leaders of the Muslim Conference in the Nationalist detention camps were sent to Pakistan. Among them were many confidents of Abbas and therefore by their presence his hands in the tussle for power were strengthened. He forthwith prepared plans to consolidate his position. On March 2, 1949, the working committee of the Muslim Conference met at Sialkot under his chairmanship and adopted a resolution according to which "the president of the Azad Kashmir Government was to be nominated by the president of the Muslim Conference". The nominated president would then in his turn "nominate the Ministers in consultation with the president of the Muslim Conference". The working committee was elected in 1946 but the majority of those present in the Sialkot meeting were not even those who had been elected then. A good many of them were nominated by the president for the purpose of the meeting. Thus both the organisation and the administration were reduced to a puppet show of which Abbas became the master in whom all the power was concentrated. No attention whatsoever was paid to seek co-operation of the people in running the administration of the Azad areas; not even an election of the general council of the

Muslim Conference or holding of a convention of the Party workers was considered necessary. The convening of a legislative assembly was not even thought of.

Being unsure of the support of the people whom he never cared to contact Ibrahim though smarting inside, did not have the courage to challenge Abbas for monopolisation of power by this undemocratic method. He could see no remedy but to yield. As per instructions contained in the working committee resolution Ibrahim resigned and was re-appointed president of Azad Kashmir by Abbas, the president of the Muslim Conference. A new Cabinet was sworn in on March 15, 1949 which included :

1.	Sardar Mohammed Ibrahim	President.
2.	Captain Nasir-ud-Din	Minister.
3.	Mir Waiz Usuf Shah	Minister.
4.	Khawaja Sanah Ullah	Minister.
5.	Syed Ali Ahmed Shah	Minister.

The adoption of the resolution was a personal triumph for Abbas though at the same time it was a fatal blow at the roots of democracy in Azad Kashmir. The Pakistan Government recognised him as the supreme head of the movement and all the financial assistance given to the infant State and the Muslim Conference organisation went to them through him.

Elated by success Abbas started to assert his dictatorial authority. He acted and behaved like an oriental autocrat. He was surrounded by parasites, flatterers and flunkeys. Within a short span of few weeks his group became quite unpopular. On May 5, 1949 therefore he was forced to announce his "temporary retirement from politics on grounds of health" He nominated Allah Rakha Sagar as acting president of the Muslim Conference in his own place. According to the Constitution of the Party Abbas could not do so as the right to elect an officiating president vests with the general council. There were protests from the workers but Abbas remained adamant. Sagar outdid Abbas in riding roughshod over the constitution. He suspended Aga Shaukat Ali, general secretary, without any authority

and replaced him and some other members of the working committee by men of his own choice. Worse still, he created provincial bitterness among the refugees by delivering speeches against *Kashmiris* (people of the Valley). dubbing them as "agents of Abdullah and other National Conference leaders". In his frenzy he went to the extent of suspecting Kashmiris as spies of the Nationalist Government. This was more than the Kashmir leaders could tolerate. Not unnaturally they all felt scandalised and great excitement prevailed in Azad Kashmir as well as in all cities of Pakistan where Kashmiris lived in appreciable numbers. Even minor clashes between Kashmiris and Jammuite Muslims were reported at different places. Mir Waiz Usuf Shah resigned his Ministership and announced the formation of a parallel Muslim Conference in a convention of more than 200 political workers of the Valley. The following comprised the office-bearers of the Conference.

1.	Mir Waiz Usuf Shah	President
2.	Aga Shaukat Ali	General Secretary
3.	Mir Abdul Aziz	Secretary
4.	Mirza Ahmed Beg	Joint Secretary

Abdur Rahim Waza was appointed its chief organiser. The rift caused by the formation of Mir Waiz's Muslim Conference started the disruption and distintegration in the ranks of the political workers of Azad Kashmir. Encouraged by the steps taken by the Kashmiris Ibrahim, in whose heart the fire of revenge was, by this time, burning fiercely, declined to accept authority of the working committee set up by Sagar.

While the Muslim Conference leaders were absorbed in the ignoble strife for personal power the people in Azad Kashmir, and the State refugees in various camps in Pakistan, were terribly suffering from privations. They had to face devastations and ravages of war. Their houses had been demolished, hamlets destroyed and towns ruined. The economy of the country was totally shattered and business was at a standstill. There was widespread unemployment. hunger and sickness in all parts. In the refugee camps conditions were simply

appalling. Uprooted and driven out of their ancestral homes the State people were denuded of all belongings and were penniless. The misery and hardship that the inmates of the camps had to bear were unspeakable. It was unbearable for the refugees to see the leaders fighting among themselves when thousands were perishing for want of shelter, food, clothing or medical aid. The financial assistance given by Pakistan did not reach the unfortunate sufferers in full. Most of it was appropriated by the leaders or their kinsmen, and the small clique of workers who were at the helm of affairs. None of the leaders had owned a car before 1947 but in Azad Kashmir no prominent worker went on foot; it was considered beneath his dignity. And top-ranking leaders were in possession of many vehicles at a time for their personal use. Some of themse cured valuable evacuee property allotted to themselves or to their relatives, sheerly due to their political influence. They also got handsome salaries fixed for themselves. Government contracts were usually given to supporters and acquaintances and not to deserving men. There were notorious cases in which thousands of rupees were misappropriated, or given as gifts of which no accounts were maintained. Corruption, nepotism and jobbery were the order of the day. Azad Kashmir became the home of two distinct classes of people so far as the standard of life was concerned. On the one side was the small group of rulers enjoying all amenities of life and in pcssession of riches of all kinds and on the other were the masses of people including refugees, emaciated, haggard-looking, hungry, shelterless and victims of disease. It was no wonder that on all sides one met with sullen looks and people flared up without much excuse for doing so.

Unmindful of these developments the Muslim Conference leaders continued their tussle for power. Ibrahim's refusal to accept the authority of Sagar brought the matters to a head. Abbas was not after all ill when he proceeded on leave. He only wanted to show that he was not so fond of power as his opponents tried to make it out. During the period of his sickness he extensively toured frontier *illaqas* of .Gilgit and

Skardu. On receiving the reports that Ibrahim and Sagar were at daggers drawn he repaired to Rawalpindi and resumed the presidentship of the Muslim Conference. Meanwhile, Ibrahim had gone to Lake Success by the end of 1949 where the Kashmir debate was to be resumed by the Security Council.

Abbas was now determined to part company with Ibrahim. To give this resolve a constitutional complexion he called a meeting of the general council of the Muslim Conference on January 10, 1950. As already mentioned this council had been elected in 1946 in Srinagar session of the Conference. The large majority of the members was still on the other side of the border. Out of the 30 or so members who were in Azad Kashmir or Pakistan barely a score attended the meeting. All the rest, whose number was more than fifty, were nominated by Abbas and invited to attend. From this body of hand-picked men he secured a mandate and authority to make any alterations he desired in the Party organisation and the Azad Kashmir Government. While the general council was in session in the office of the Muslim League at Rawalpindi a hostile demonstration was held by the workers of the Mir Waiz's Muslim Conference when a clash occurred and some people were bruised on both sides.

Peremptorily and in an unstatesmanlike manner but with the fullest agreement of the Pakistan authorities Abbas dissolved the Azad Kashmir Government soon after Ibrahim's return from Lake Success. On May 30, 1950 he then announced the formation of a new cabinet consisting of :

1.	Sayid Ali Ahmed Shah	President
2.	Khwaja Sana Ullah Shamim	Minister
3.	Sayid Nazir Hussain Shah	Minister
4.	Khwaja Ghulam Mohammed Jeweller	Minister
5.	Colonel Sher Ahmed Khan	Minister

Abbas formally invited Ibrahim to join the new Government as its head but he declined not on any principle but simply because he was to accept the nominees of the former as his cabinet colleagues. Only three days later on June 2, Colonel Sher Ahmed Khan resigned because the Sudhan tribe, the sword

arm of the State Muslims, to which both he and Ibrahim belong had lost confidence in the Government and wanted the Colonel to quit it.

The struggle for power that had been waged behind the scenes so far now came into the open. The people of Azad Kashmir and the refugees were disgusted with both sets of the Muslim Conference leaders but when Ibrahim left the Government or was obliged to go out he rallied all the heterogeneous forces round himself. Undoubtedly, he and his band of devoted admirers were fighting for power which had been snatched from their hands but there were other elements among his followers. There were those intellectuals and political workers under the leadership of Mir Abdul Aziz who wanted to establish democratic traditions in Azad Kashmir and denounced the unconstitutional and dictatorial methods employed by Abbas group in running the administration and the organisation of the Muslim Conference. There were sensitive Kashmiris to whom the provincialism of Sagar was agonising. There were the non-political teeming, toiling and suffering masses who felt convinced that the ruling clique was responsible for the miseries and wanted to overthrow it. This combination was formidable indeed. But the complacent Abbas resting too much on the support of Pakistan Government treated it beneath contempt.

The opponents of Abbas group raised the slogan "democracy or death" and demanded the reorganisation of the Muslim Conference and the Azad Kashmir Government through constitutional and democratic methods. An *ad hoc* committee was formed with Mir Waiz Usuf Shah and Mir Abdul Aziz as its president and secretary respectively. The committee launched a civil disobedience movement which soon developed into a violent agitation. The Government arrested nearly 500 persons and kept them in detention. The hostile demonstrations were ruthlessly put down. But the movement instead of showing any signs of slackening grew in dimensions. The officials of the Azad Kashmir Government were disaffected and scores had to be punished by transfer, degradation or even dismissal.

When the Azad Kashmir Police was found inadequate to

cope with the situation Pakistan armies were called out. At places like Rawalakot and Pallandri in Poonch, the home of demobilised war veterans, small battles were fought between the armed fighters for freedom and the troops. Details about this movement shall have to be unearthed by some future historian as for obvious reasons very little was allowed to be published in the Pakistan Press and still less permitted to go outside that country.

By the end of 1950 the Pakistan Government realised that it was not advisable to patronise one or the other group among the Azad Kashmir politicians. It came to the conclusion that the best course was to afford all groups equal opportunities to function and recognise none as the sole representative of the State people. Pakistan also tightened her hold still further on the affairs of Azad Kashmir.

In January 1951 the opponents of Abbas group held a convention of workers of "all shades of opinion" under the presidentship of Colonel Sher Ahmed Khan. Nearly 300 delegates attended it and remained in session on January 20, 21 and 22.

The convention adopted fifteen resolutions. It regretted the failure of Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference in London to solve the Kashmir issue and demanded that an impartial plebiscite should be held at an early date to end the dispute. By another resolution the convention expressed "no confidence" in the Azad Kashmir Government and demanded the establishment of a democratic set-up in the Azad areas. Yet another resolution denounced the farce of elections for which preparations were in progress at the time in the Valley and Jammu to bring a constituent assembly into existence. According to one resolution the Dogra rule was declared to be over in the State as "the Maharaja had, by his inhuman acts, forfeited his right to rule".

The convention declared that the Muslim Conference over which Abbas presided had lost its representative character and could no longer deliver the goods on behalf of the State Muslims. It was therefore decided to elect a new general council and a new working committee from among the delegates

attending the session. Colonel Sher Ahmed Khan was elected as president of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and Mir Abdul Aziz as its general secretary.

A few weeks after the convention the headquarters of the newly-organised Muslim Conference were shifted to Poonch possibly because the large following of the two prominent leaders, Ibrahim and Sher Ahmed, belonged to this area. From here the Conference demanded that the Azad Kashmir Government should be reorganised by which nothing more appears to have been the objective than that the leaders of this organisation also should be allotted a substantial share in the administration. But as Abbas was adament not to concede this it became difficult for the Pakistan Government to reconcile the two.

In the meantime on January 8, Abbas formulated a Set of Rules for the conduct of governmental business in Azad Kashmir and circulated the same in all offices for compliance. According to these Rules he arrogated to himself, officially for the first time, the elevated position of the Supreme Head which no representative body of people had bestowed upon him. Some of the clauses of the Rules of Business were :

"Clause 6 : The Supreme Head shall nominate the President and other members of the Council (of Ministers) and determine the allocation of portfolios.

7 : The Council shall be collectively responsible to the Supreme Head for the administration of the Azad Kashmir territory and shall hold office during his pleasure.

8 : The Supreme Head may issue directives to the Council on all matters of policy.

9 : If the Supreme Head desires to see any paper or obtain any information, he will send a requisition to the Secretary-General who will submit the papers or supply the information required through the President.

10 : The appointment of Chief Justice and Judges of the High Court of Judicature for Azad Kashmir shall vest in the Supreme Head and they shall hold office during his pleasure.

11 : Supreme legislative powers shall vest in the Council of Ministers but no law shall come into force unless it has received the assent of the Supreme Head. The Supreme Head may recommend such amendments or laws submitted to him as he deems fit for the Council"

A STILL-BORN AZAD KASHMIR

The publication of the Rules of Business raised a storm in Azad Kashmir political circles. Strong protests were made against the dictatorial tendencies so obvious in the Rules. In a pamphlet entitled "Dictatorship in Azad Kashmir" Mir Abdul Aziz compared the Supreme Head with the Maharaja and showed that the Dogra ruler never wielded such unbridled powers and yet he was disliked by the Kashmiris. "It is clear", protested Mir Abdul Aziz, "that a single individual has assumed untrammelled authority over all the affairs of the State. While he enjoys complete sovereignty over everything in the administration he himself is not open to question before any public body. There is no legislative assembly nor anything of that nature in Azad Kashmir. The Muslim Conference, like the Azad Kashmir Cabinet and administration is a one-man show. Its working committee, its present general council and all other office holders are nominated and appointed by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas the 'Supreme Head' at his own sweet will". On behalf of the people of Jammu and Kashmir Mir Abdul Aziz appealed to the Government of Pakistan "to intervene in this unsavoury state of affairs and set matters right in Azad Kashmir politics". Rightly did he point out that "people in Azad Kashmir are fighting for democracy, freedom and, for the right of self-determination and not for the glorification of any individual or clique or group of politicians". "Pakistan is supposed to be advocating the right of self-determination of Kashmiris", stated Mir Abdul Aziz, "which India is denying them. Will the Government of Pakistan rise to the occasion and deliver the unfortunate people of Azad Kashmir from the hands of a new despotism".

It has been mentioned earlier in this book that Abdul Salam Yatu, President, Kisan Mazdoor Conference, was released in March 1951 and externed to Pakistan. On meeting his comrades who had been forced to cross the cease-fire line before him, Yatu came to know about the slaughter of democracy and the unspeakable miseries and privations of the people of Azad Kashmir. In consultation with his associates he joined the popular demand that there should be a democratic set-up in the areas on that side of the cease-fire line to inspire confidence

about their future among the State people. Yatu suggested the immediate establishment of a legislative assembly to be elected on the basis of adult franchise. He strongly criticised the principle that the Azad Kashmir Government should be elected by the leaders of one Party—the Muslim Conference—and be responsible to them. "Nowhere in the world", declared Yatu. "has any Government conferred the status of Parliament on the general council of a political party as is being done in Azad Kashmir. It is anti-democratic, highly objectionable and unheard of in the constitutional practices of modern history".

On May 8, 1951 a delegation of the Kashmir leaders met Nawab M. A. Gurmani, Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Pakistan Government, and informed him of the growing uneasiness among the people over the corruption, nepotism and injustice in Azad Kashmir. The Minister asked the delegation to give him a plan suggesting how it could be ended. A plan was prepared and sent to him but nothing came out of it for more than a month.

In June 1951 the high command of the Muslim Conference formed by Ibrahim group decided to establish a parallel government in Azad Kashmir with its headquarters at Poonch. An interim administrative committee was formed to prepare a scheme for the purpose. The Pakistan Government did not like this move and lest there is an armed clash between the warlike Poonchis and the authorities of Azad Kashmir, the Government despatched the Frontier Brigade to Rawalakot and held a military parade and demonstration in Poonch. Undeterred, however, the general council of Ibrahim's Muslim Conference held a meeting in Dhirkot and confirmed the resolution of the working committee to establish a parallel government. It was decided that the parallel government should function from August 29, 1951. A proclamation was drafted and the personnel of the Government was chosen. Considering the growing strength of the Ibrahim group this development became a source of anxiety to the well-wishers of Azad Kashmir as well as to the Pakistan authorities. The former were successful in arranging a meeting between Abbas and Ibrahim to compose their differences. Both the leaders indulged in long discourses on

August 27-29 but the pourparlers ended without success. When division of power is the aim ambitious politicians can hardly agree. The failure made it imperative that the Pakistan Government should intervene. A representative of the Central Government met the leaders of the Ibrahim group at Kohala and successfully persuaded them to postpone the announcement about the formation of the parallel government for one month. The month passed in excitement but the Pakistan Government could not arrive at any definite conclusions. Finally Liaquat Ali Khan decided to visit Azad Kashmir personally and settle the complicated affairs on the spot. This decision was made public by the leaders as well as by Moin-ud-Din, a representative of the Pakistan Government, in a public meeting at Tradkhal on September 27, two days before the dreaded proclamation was to be made.

Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated at Rawalpindi while on his way to Azad Kashmir. This again delayed the settlement. But the matter demanded urgent attention and in November three Ministers of the Pakistan Government including Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din, the new Prime Minister, came to Rawalpindi and gave hearings to the leaders of all shades of political opinion. Their inquiry led them to the conclusion that an All-Parties Cabinet alone could restore peace in Azad Kashmir. It was a too simple solution and certainly could not have proved efficacious to end the economic ills, the social evils and the political slavery of the people which were at the base of all restlessness in the country. It could however have satiated the hunger of the vociferous and disgruntled rabble-rousers and might have cleared the surcharged atmosphere to some extent. But the plan was not acceptable to Abbas. When pressed to agree he, in anger, made a public declaration that he had decided to retire from politics without assigning any reasons for the same. He resigned the post of the Supreme Head of the Azad Kashmir Government and, curiously, submitted the resignation not to the working committee of his Muslim Conference but to the Prime Minister of Pakistan. With the disappearance of Abbas Government the last semblance of representative admi-

nistration in Azad Kashmir also vanished. The Pakistan Government now handled the affairs without any cover. Perhaps they could not do otherwise; the cantankerous, power-hungry, short-sighted and self-centred politicians had left them no other alternative. The Pakistan Government announced that a new general council of the Muslim Conference would be elected within three months and that body besides choosing its working committee would also set up a government for Azad Kashmir. Meanwhile, strangely enough, of all the leaders Mir Waiz Usuf Shah was appointed on December 2, 1951 as Administrator for three months. Perhaps because of his ignorance, docility and frailty the Pakistan authorities thought that it would be most easy to deal with him and get things done as they liked.

The Ibrahim group welcomed the announcement of the Pakistan Government. They were jubilant that Abbas and his associates had been ousted from the field. It did not occur to them that while doing so they had made the Pakistan authorities the unquestioned master of Azad Kashmir and that it had dealt a fatal blow at democracy the establishment of which was, professedly at any rate, their ultimate goal. Instead of looking towards the people and deriving their strength from them all the leaders in Azad Kashmir had turned their eyes towards the Government at Karachi from which they demanded crumbs of power. Ironically every Muslim political worker from the highest to the lowest boastfully called Azad Kashmir the liberated areas and their activities the movement for liberation of Kashmir. And it was this freedom that they wanted to import into the Valley to benefit the Kashmiris who were suffering under the yoke of Dogra autocracy and Indian imperialism. Little wonder that such hollow claims and spurious slogans did not catch imagination or evoke sympathy from the other side of the border. Freedom and liberation are not mere sentimental conceptions. In modern times they have a content affecting the political, social and economic lives of individuals. In Azad Kashmir by the end of 1951 democracy had been smothered mainly by the leaders with their own hands and in

the name of freedom of the people what they wanted to establish was their own group rule. It was mockery to call the area Azad Kashmir.

The rest of the story is briefly told. After the installation of Mir Waiz Usuf Shah on the *gaddi* the Pakistan Government got the upper hand in Azad Kashmir affairs. The elections of the Muslim Conference were boycotted by Mir Waiz and some of his close associates because it appeared to this notorious reactionary that he could not win the majority. Abbas did not take any interest in them though some of his colleagues participated and set up their nominees as candidates.But the majority of seats in the general council was captured by the Ibrahim group. A session of the new council were held in Muzaffarabad on May 18, 1952 where Ibrahim was elected as president of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and Qureshi Mohammed Usuf as its general secretary. The general council nominated Raja Mohammed Haider Khan of Muzaffarabad as President of the Azad Kashmir Government.

Under the pretext that the new Muslim Conference was not fully representative of the people as important elements in political life had not participated in the elections the Pakistan Government refused to accept the dicision of the general council and significantly inflicted on June 21, 1952 a new government of its own choice on the people. Azad Kashmir was now virtually a colony of Pakistan and the members of the Government were no more than the officials nominated by the authorities at Karachi. The announcement of the new Government came as a bolt from the blue to Ibrahim group for, the Pakistan Government had successfully persuaded Colonel Sher Ahmed Khan, the boosted hero of the group, to accept the presidentship of the new nominated Government. Another member of the group, Noor Hussain, could not also resist the temptation and in utter disregard of the mandate of the group joined the Government. When power is the aim it is futile to expect ambitious men to sacrifice self interest for the cause of the party. The rest of the Ministers, ChaudhriHamid Ullah, Sardar Abdul Qayyum and Pir Zia-ud-Din, were taken from Abbas group. Mir

Waiz Usuf Shah was appointed as the permanent adviser to the Ministry for Kashmir Affairs in the Pakistan Government.

To the protests raised against the nomination of the new Government which was responsible to no party, the Pakistan Government retorted that this was the most representative Government as leaders of all the three groups of Muslim Conference workers had been included in it. This might be true so far as the power-hungry leaders are concerned but there can be no denial that the people had absolutely no voice in the formation of the Council of Ministers. It is deeply regrettable that with every change of Government the matters have worsened till at last today the administration has lost all touch with the masses in the so-called liberated areas of the State.

Appropriately, soon after the present Government was foisted upon the people Colonel Sher Ahmed Khan, presumably under directions from his patrons, the officials of the Kashmir Affairs Ministry, formulated new Rules of Business which are, in effect, the Constitution of the Azad Kashmir Government. These were sanctioned and circulated on October 28, 1952. The Rules legally and constitutionally made the Azad Kashmir Government totally subservient to the Kashmir Affairs Ministry of Pakistan. Some of the Articles of the Rules will be read with interest :

Article 5 : The President of Azad Kashmir Government shall hold office during the pleasure of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference duly recognised as such by the Government of Pakistan in the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs.

Article 6 : The Joint Secretary, Ministry for Kashmir Affairs may attend meetings of the Council and tender advice on any matter under discussion.

Article 7 : The appointment of the Chairman and members of the Public Services Commission shall vest in the President in consultation with the Government of Pakistan in Ministry for Kashmir Affairs.

Arricle 8 : Supreme Legislative power shall vest in the Council (of Ministers) provided that no draft legislation shall be put before the Council without obtaining the advice of the Ministry for Kashmir Affairs thereon, and in case it is proposed to come to a decision at variance with such advice it shall not be

given effect to without prior consultation with the Ministry for Kashmir Affairs.

Article 21 The Ministry for Kashmir Affairs shall exercise general supervision over the services with a view to ensuring that Government employees discharge their duty properly.

Schedule 1 Part 4 : In addition to general supervision over all departments of the Government, the Joint Secretary, Ministry for Kashmir Affairs, shall pass final orders on appeals against orders passed by Secretaries and Heads of Departments in respect of Government servants under their control in all matters of appointments, promotions and disciplinary actions of all kinds.

According to these Rules Pakistan Government recognised the Muslim Conference as the representative organisation of the State people. But there are at least three Muslim Conferences equally powerful (or powerless) in existence. One is led by Ibrahim, second by Abbas and the third by Mir Waiz. All efforts to bring the three groups under one banner have failed so far. Consequently the Pakistan authorities have retained the substance of power in their own hands.

These Rules of Business reduced the status of Azad Kashmir Government lower than that of a municipal committee and the impotent leaders calling themselves revolutionaries and fighting for the complete freedem of the entire Jammu and Kashmir State were helpless onlookers because in their unseemly scramble for power they had alienated the people from themselves.

Notwithstanding the mutual rivalry and antagonism of the Muslim Conference leaders Azad Kashmir has witnessed the growth of a more or less independent Press. Some of the experienced and capable journalists of Jammu and Kashmir were forced to leave their homes and take refuge on the other side of the cease-fire line. They started new journals to fight for the freedom of their country. At present no less than twenty such journals are being published from Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Sialkot and Rawalpindi. Though all of them stress that the State should accede to Pakistan they differ in their views about the future shape and constitutional set up of the country. While the Jammu Muslims are frankly and aggressively communal in their outlook

and are enthused by the ideal of a religious State most of the Kashmiris cherish a liberal view. Among the outstanding journals are *Awaz-i-Haq, Hamari Awaz, Kashmir, Mujahid,* and *Aghaz.*

It is agreeably surprising that while most of the Azad Kashmir journals support one or the other group of the leaders they have been able to form a united organisation of their own to work for the advancement of the journalistic profession.

The refusal of Pakistan Government to accept the general council and the office bearers of the Muslim Conference, elected in the Muzaffarabad session, as the sole representative body, heartened the Abbas group to persuade their leader to stage a come-back. It is not in the nature of an ambitious politician to remain in retirement for long. Abbas must have been already repenting over his decision. A convention of workers was arranged at Mirpur on March 14, 1953 where he announced his decision to return to politics. Very brave words were uttered in the convention by leaders of the group; resolutions were passed suggesting ways and methods of liberating the India-held Kashmir. But no speaker pointed to the thraldom of Azad Kashmir or the shameful scramble for power among the leaders. The mentality of the liberators was perhaps best represented by one noticeable resolution which the convention adopted; it supported the anti-Ahmadiya agitation in West Pakistan and demanded that the Ahmadis should be declared a non-Muslim minority community. Abbas announced in the convention that he had formulated a programme for the liberation of the State which he would put before the people soon. Speaking at Gujranwala a few days later he demanded that instead of seeking a solution through the mediation of U.N. or negotiations between Pakistan and India arrangements should be made to bring Abdullah and himself together and the reins of administration for the whole State handed over to them to settle the dispute. Being a realist, though equally power-thirsty as Abbas, Abdullah spurned this offer by replying that in the prevailing conditions both of them were helpless and it was India and Pakistan who alone could settle the dispute which was of international importance.

Abdullah added that Abbas had done absolutely nothing for the welfare and betterment of Azad Kashmir and therefore the suggestion was disingenuous.

Abbas belongs to a group of those politicians who have nourished themselves on the food of religious differences in mankind. His stock-in-trade has ever been appeals to the baser passions of his co-religionist countrymen. During pre-partition days this used to be a profitable business especially in Kashmir State where the overwhelming majority of people is Muslim and the ruler was a Hindu. When Abbas revived the Muslim Conference in 1942 he was sure to oust Abdullah from State politics and lead the Muslims. Perhaps he might have done so had independence and the partition of the sub-continent come a few years later. In Azad Kashmir there is no Hindu-Muslim question but when Abbas arrived in this land of his dreams he soon proved misfit in the new surroundings. In the words of Erich Fromme his is a case of fear of freedom. Throughout his 22-year public career Abbas could conceive no better ideal of freedom than liberation of Muslims from Hindu India. In Azad Kashmir that goal has already been achieved but Muslims continue to be slaves and and even as Supreme Head he could not help them. In his ideal State powerful rivals have appeared who challenge his leadership, a challenge which he cannot meet. Muslims are as poverty-stricken, hungry and wretched as before or even worse. Consequently he is afraid of this freedom and wants to take shelter under some bigger man whom he can accept as his leader. To Abbas no one in the State appears big enough except Abdullah under whose fostering care he has enjoyed a deputy leadership for several years. In suggesting that Abdullah and he should be brought together to settle Kashmir dispute Abbas was seeking a remedy of his own psychological trouble.

The Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan were able to arrive at an agreement regarding the unsolved points in the Kashmir dispute and the induction into office of the Plebiscite Administrator in August 1953. Sensible and peace-loving people all over the sub-continent welcomed this happy development in the

relation of the two countries. But the Abbas group held a convention on September 18, 1953, at Lahore and adopted a resolution in which after condemning India in usual terms a demand was made that "all restrictions and responsibilities in connection with Kashmir should be ended and a struggle for liberation should be launched afresh". The resolution was moved by Hamid Ullah Khan, Finance Minister of Azad Kashmir. Forgetting his position he made an inflammatory, and utterly irresponsible speech in the convention. The resolution and the speeches delivered were untimely, unstatesmanlike and mischievous. They did not help the State people in any way and only harmed the cause of liberation. Of course Abbas, Hamid Ullah and other sponsors of the convention are fully conscious of the fact that at present Pakistan is not in a position to restart the Kashmir war; they only aim at rousing the rabble to defeat their political opponents by these demagogic utterances.

The present Azad Kashmir Government has become the laughing stock of the world. It was reported in 1953 that one Minister Zia-ud-Din wanted to hold a public meeting at a village and actually went to address it but the President of Azad Kashmir had issued orders banning the meeting. The Inspector General of Police told the Minister that he shall have to arrest him if a meeting was held and if he tried to address it.

The President of Azad Kashmir himself is no more powerful than any one of his Ministers. When his attention was drawn in a Press conference to a report that disciplinary action was contemplated against Hamid Ullah for criticising Pakistan Prime Minister's Kashmir policy Col. Sher Ahmed Khan, President, Azad Kashmir, said that "Hamid Ullah was free to express his views in his personal capacity and the question of taking any action did not arise" Only a couple of days after this declaration was made Hamid Ullah was dismissed from the Cabinet on September 18, by the President for "encouraging defiance of lawful authority and setting one class of people against another". He was also accused of "grossly abusing his powers as a Minister" and being "*prima facie* guilty of acts of nepotism and private gain". Obviously Col. Sher Ahmed was

acting under instructions of the Kashmir Affairs Ministry of the Pakistan Government as its puppet. Commenting on his dismissal Hamid Ullah complained that "an ordinary clerk in the Kashmir Affairs Ministry had a greater say in problems affecting Azad Kashmir than the President of the Government of the territory". This is quite correct but it was this puppet Government that Hamid Ullah had served as a Minister for more than a year. And it needed the stroke of dismissal to awaken him to the reality of the situation.

Doubtless, the political, economic and social conditions in Azad Kashmir have deteriorated. The working classes are passing through a period of acute distress. "When we unfurled the banner of Azad Kashmir", ruefully stated Nazir Hussain Shah, an ex-Minister of Azad Kashmir, in a public speech in Abbaspura (Poonch) in April 1953, "people were confident that Azad Kashmir will prove a heaven on earth for the people of the State and they will be freed politically as well as economically. But what do we find today after six years struggle ; conditions are worsening day after day; there is famine every where; people eke out half-starved lives ; hundreds have died of hunger; the avenues of income are decreasing, unemployment and poverty are widespread ; necessities of life have grown scarce and taxes have increased. As a consequence of economic deterioration people are forced to commit more and more crimes."

There is no gainsaying the fact that the rulers of Pakistan have not been able to inspire confidence among the State people who have taken refuge in that country. "The Muslim League Government of Pakistan", disappointingly wrote the Independent Weekly *Kashmir* of Muzaffarabad in its issue of December 26, 1953, "has imposed, through the Kashmir Affairs Ministry, such an undemocratic set-up to deprive the Kashmir people of their right of self-determination as has been done on the other side of the cease-fire line by the aggressive Indian Government. The League Government has thrust the same feudal structure on Azad Kashmir as on the people of Pakistan. Its sole aim is to maintain the economic structure in the State which obtained under the Dogra rule; it tries not to alter it in any manner".

A golden opportunity had come in the way of the Muslim Conference leaders when in 1947 the revolution gave them a part of the State to administer. They could have built an ideal democratic State not only to prove their efficiency, patriotism and love for freedom but also to influence the public opinion in the Valley and other parts of the State on the Indian side. Instead, almost from the start they indulged in bickerings and scramble for power and positions. They paid no attention whatsoever to solve the economic and social problems of the people. They left *jagirdari* and absentee landlordism untouched. They did not formulate any plan for the welfare of the people in the spheres of health and education. Jobbery, nepotism and corruption are no less rampant in Azad Kashmir than they are in the other Kashmir. The plight of the man in the street is indescribable indeed.

The mutual quarrels among the leaders in Azad Kashmir and the sufferings of the people and refugees living in those areas have indirectly contributed to the prolongation of the stalemate in the Kashmir problem. The leaders of the three groups try to excel each other in threatening India and the U.N. for not settling the dispute and in assuring the people of the Valley that they will shed the last drop of blood to liberate them. But none of the leaders seems to realise that the contribution they could make to the heroic resistance movement of Kashmir can be only through composing their mutual differences and by establishing a model progressive and democratic State in Azad Kashmir.

CHAPTER THIRTY

OPPORTUNISTS FALL OUT

MANY Muslims believe the great mistake Abdullah and his colleagues committed was that they converted the Muslim Conference into the National Conference in 1939. They think that had the politics of Kashmir not been secularised by the Muslim leaders the people today would not have found themselves in the clutches of misfortune. But that is not true. What is the lesson taught by the history of freedom movements in the world ? It is that nations have progressed and prospered to the extent that reason, and not fanaticism, has been the guiding principle in their social, political and economic affairs. The enslaved peoples have throughout history raised the banner of rationalism to fight for liberation. The philosophy that worked miracles in French, American and Russian revolutions was no other than the philosophy of reason and those working to destroy these revolutions were taking shelter under diverse creeds based on irrationalism. Islam itself marched from triumph to triumph during the period of Abbasids not so much by the sword as by fighting with the mighty weapon of rationalist philosophy taught by the Motazilla School of thinkers. It stopped progressing when that weapon was laid aside.

The Muslim Rationalists have proved that a man gifted with sound reasoning and the power of observation of natural objects can attain perfect human life without the aid of sacred books or religious teachers. They also believe that man by nature is progressive and can attain salvation by self discipline and inner light even without the light of revealed religion.

In modern times one of the lessons that reason has taught us is that so long as religion and politics go together there is little hope for people under bondage. Generally tyrants, exploiters and despots thrive under the cloak of religion. At one time

religion was the need without which man could not exist and society could not prosper. Religion was the creation of the primitive man struggling for knowledge and in search of truth. But today politics must be secularised if the goal of complete freedom is to be achieved. Sectional and communal movements might bring riches, crumbs of office to fortune-hunters and power for demagogues but freedom is beyond their reach. It is for the attainment of the coveted objective of freedom that we and our ancestors have been fighting for the past centuries.

The mistake of the Kashmir Nationalists consists in accepting the Hindu nationalism of the Congress as genuine secularism. The teachings of Mahatma Gandhi on which Congress secularism has been reared is not free from taint of communalism. So long as politics and religion go together there can be no secularism. Notwithstanding their persistent claims Gandhists cannot separate the two because the philosophy of the Mahatma does not allow it. Misled by the attractive slogans of Congressmen, Kashmir Nationalists were slowly but steadily entangled in the spider's web. Time and again they were warned by those who knew better of the coming dangers; but temptation of power, pelf and publicity proved irresistible and the Nationalists accepted the hegemony of the Indian imperialists. If religious nationalism is to be the political creed it is clear that Kashmir Muslims will any day prefer Muslim nationalism of the League to Hindu nationalism of the Congress. There is the cause of the misfortunes of the Kashmir Nationalists.

Hindu nationalism and Muslim nationalism are two mutually exclusive conceptions. That necessitated the partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan. Had Congress been secular in practice as it claims to be in theory, the need for giving special status in the Constitution of India to Kashmir would never have arisen. The relations of New Delhi with Srinagar would be most cordial and Kashmir would be just like any other State of India. The leaders of the National Conference wanted to maintain the impossible position of being the champions of Muslim nationalism inside the State and votaries of Hindu nationalism in India. That was unabashed opportunism.

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So long as India was engaged in a war against British imperialism the dual role of Kashmir Nationalists was allowed to pass unnoticed. But when India attained independence and the Indian armies occupied Kashmir the antagonism became acute. The interests of Hindu nationalism clashed with the interests of Muslim nationalism in the State. At every step there was conflict. If the one wanted to end the Dogra autocracy, the other ardently desired to vest the Maharaja with full powers, as a check over his Cabinet dominated by Muslims. If accelerated recruitment of Muslims in administrative services was the objective of the one the very opposite was the endeavour of the other. If the one struggled for economic and social reforms to liberate the Muslim masses the other wanted to maintain the *status quo* to continue power in the hands of upper class Hindus. Sensitive Nationalists were torn inwardly by this conflict and clash of ideals between themselves and those whom they had owned as their co-fighters for the common goal. But there was no escape as the Nationalists were not prepared to relinquish office bestowed upon them by the magnanimous Indian imperialism.

In an earlier chapter I have stated that it was the policy of the moderates among the Hindu Nationalists, that is the Congress leaders, that so long as the Kashmir nationalists unstintedly supported the State's accession to India, in matters of lesser importance they should be allowed to have their own way. That is how the Maharaja could be externed and subsequently deposed, the Big Landed Estates Abolition Act could be passed and the debts scaled down. It has not been so easy to get these things done speedily with the mere stroke of pen in other parts of India. The Congress rulers were not generous for nothing. To them this appeared to be a sagacious policy and a profitable investment in Kashmir at any rate so far as the Nationalists were concerned. And they were right.

For five long years Abdullah and his colleagues vigorously supported without a murmur the Indian stand and silenced the voice of patriotism and suppressed the urge of freedom in the Valley. "So long as a single Muslim remains alive in Kashmir"

declared Abdullah in a public speech in Calcutta on December 23, 1950, "he will not allow the State to bow down to the two-nation theory. The people of Kashmir have implicit faith in India and Nehru. We are not fighting in Kashmir against Pakistan. We are only preserving the noble tradition of brotherhood for which India and her leadership has stood for so many years. India has never wanted war with Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. She has no ambition of territory there because she has enough of it. From the very beginning she has declared that she would abide by the wishes of the people of the State". In another speech at Madras on February 11, 1951, he said : "There has been community of sufferings and ideals between the people of India and the people of Kashmir in the past and today we tie our destiny with the rest of India because of her belief in secularism, democracy and progress". And what did the Nationalist leader think about Pakistan and its ideology? He observed : "Pakistan was achieved at the cost of blood and tears of millions of people who suffered before and after partition at the hands of Pakistani leaders. Those leaders used to preach to the Muslims that they cannot be free in the Hindu-dominated India, but in the recent general elections you have proved to the hilt that communal bigotry cannot flourish in our country. This is a great lesson to the people of Pakistan and a great victory for secular democracy to which India is pledged".

That is not all. Addressing a public gathering in Delhi on September 10, 1951, Abdullah stated : "Pakistan does not want a free plebiscite in Kashmir but wants first to create bloodshed, terror and large scale Hindu-Muslim riots and then bludgeon people in voting for accession to it. That we will never allow". Abdullah persistently opposed the idea of allowing Pakistan to have any say in the Kashmir dispute. "Besides being a flagrant violation of all constitutional laws", he told a party of Bombay students in Srinagar on May 13, 1951, "it is morally wrong to put Pakistan, an aggressor, on an equal footing with India which came to the rescue of Kashmir at the invitation of the ruler and the people of the State".

Realists in India have always been entertaining doubts if

after the partition of the subcontinent Kashmir Muslims will vote for the State's accession to India. Lest the circle of such men should widen and jeopardise the privileged position of the clique in power, the Nationalist leaders used to go on extensive tours throughout the country to allay these fears. "There is a feeling in some sections of the people in India", Abdullah told a Press conference in Bombay on January 25, 1951, "that because we are a Muslim people we shall logically vote for accession to Pakistan. This is entirely wrong. Kashmiris have suffered at the hands of fanatical hordes of tribesmen from across the border as well as at those of armed forces of Pakistan. They know that they cannot develop unless they are under a secular democracy. They have, moreover, always received nothing but affection, sympathy and active help from the people of India".

Abdullah was happy that he had liberated his homeland and that the Nationalists were building democracy in the State. "I am sure the day is not far off", he told his Constituent Assembly on March 26, 1952, "when the State will blossom forth as a country of peace and plenty". His only regret was that his countrymen across the cease-fire line could not share this prosperity. "They are being denied the joy and pride of being co-sharers in the task of building New Kashmir". Abdullah was so enamoured of the Gandhian secularism that addressing leading members of Delhi's political and trade organisations at the residence of the Chief Minister of the State in 1952 he declared. "India's fundamental character is secularism for which Mahatma Gandhi has even laid his life. Parties against this fundamental principle could not be regarded friends of the country; they forfeit all rights of freedom to live and move about. We have faced untold miseries during the last five years for the defence of the same principles and if India is in Kashmir today it is also for the protection of the same ideology."

If Abdullah had no doubts about the harmony of the ideals of the people of India and Kashmir he was equally sure that the State had acceded to India permanently. "No one has been able to question this accession on legal or constitutional grounds",

said he before his Constituent Assembly on March 25, 1952. "It is only Pakistan which says that this accession does not enjoy the backing of the people. Even so the present dispute is not whether Kashmir has acceded to India or Pakistan but how best to enable the people to ratify the accession to India. It is clear, therefore, that so long as people do not annul this accession, which is legally and constitutionally perfect, India cannot be expected to forego her rights and responsibilities arising out of this accession".

The Nationalists never want to have a plebiscite held in the State to ascertain the views of the people. They create all conceivable hurdles in the path of a peaceful solution. One of their conditions has been that the Azad Kashmir areas should be handed over to them so that the blessings of the Congress secularism and democracy might be extended to the people of that area before the plebiscite is held. "The people of Kashmir cannot and will not participate in a plebiscite", declared Abdullah at the inauguration of the Tamil Nad Political Conference in Madras, "so long as the sovereignty of the legal Government of Jammu and Kashmir State is not restored". In the same strain he told his Constituent Assembly on March 25, 1952: "Not until the fundamental unity of this State is restored and not until people in every part of the State are enabled to freely associate to decide their own future can there be any lasting or peaceful settlement of Kashmir problem". Addressing the All India Congress Committee at Bangalore in 1952 he advised: "The Kashmir question should not be treated lightly on a mere plane of taking of votes in a plebiscite".

The extracts of speeches and statements quoted above are but a few out of literally hundreds that Abdullah made during the last six years since the Nationalists came to power. He was not alone in making these. From the top-ranking leaders to the humblest members of the party all Nationalists repeated the same views and sentiments in their respective spheres of influence. But despite these seemingly bold and unambiguous declarations the mind of the Nationalists is tossed by fears and doubts.

Experience did not allow them to be sure about Congress being a secular body or India being a democracy. For, from the outset they wanted to keep Kashmir aloof. If there is identity of ideals and interests between India and Kashmir as the Nationalists reiterate times without number there is no sense in isolating Kashmir. Indeed, the common goal can be attained only by the two countries coming closer and working in unison. But this is what the Nationalists oppose tooth and nail proving thereby that they do not believe India to be secular or progressive. Yet from house tops they continue to shout that the accession to India is the best course for the Kashmiris to adopt. Doubtless, it is the lure of office which prompts the Nationalists to resort to this double dealing and opportunism. There is no Nationalist leader who does not share the spoils that political power brings in manifold ways. All of them are fully conscious of the fact that they are making hay because the Indian sun is shining on the Kashmir sky. Had the Indian forces not occupied Kashmir it is certain the Nationalists could not have come to power. There are other political parties in the State which combined wield far greater influence than they do. Therefore the Nationalists want Kashmir to remain with India but at the same time keep her at an arm's length in order not to offend the State Muslims who, they know, are against the accession.

Hindu nationalists however have their own designs. Whether extremists or moderates they desire full integration of the State with India, the former all at once and the latter by well-considered steps. India is not spending fabulous amounts to keep Muslim nationalism alive in Kashmir or even to establish a democratic set-up in the State. Indian leaders are anxious to see the Gandhian revivalist ideolgy fostered in Kashmir, the ancient seat of Hindu learning and culture. Because Congressmen put him in the saddle and accepted all his demands of secondary nature when compared with the basic issue of accession in which he professed to be whole-heartedly with India, Abdullah like all hardened opportunists quietened the qualms of his conscience and suppressed the fears of his followers. As a matter of fact the more these fears and suspicions

became strengthened in his mind and widespread in his party the more pronounced and unequivocal were his declarations in support of Gandhian nationalism and Congress secularism. But simultaneously he was thinking of an alternative and severance of connection with India. For obvious reasons accession to Pakistan he would never countenance. But he and his admirers were every now and then considering the possibility of establishing Independent Kashmir. Once he thought loudly about it when in May 1949 in an interview with a foreign correspondent he advocated the proposal. Only a week later he had to eat his own words. However the talk behind the doors did not stop. Reports about these crossing the mountains caused uneasiness in Indian nationalist circles. But opportunist-like Abdullah continued to make attempts to hide what was in his mind. "The idea of an Independent Kashmir", he told a party of Bombay students on May 13, 1951", is impossible and impracticable in the present international context. Except for Russia and U.S.A., no truly independent State exists in the world today and for us (a tiny State) to think in terms of independence with five powers surrounding us and looking at us with mixed motives, will be committing suicide pure and simple". As we shall presently see Abdullah did not stick to these views for long.

The rise of Dogra nationalism in Jammu which is part and parcel of Hindu nationalism in India and is antagonistic to Muslim nationalism of Kashmir opened the eyes of the Kashmir Nationalists and at least some of them including Abdullah realised that the path they were treading was beset with great dangers. The Praja Parishad made three onslaughts on the Nationalist Government; first in February 1949, second in the beginning of 1952 and third by the end of that year. The first attempt produced little impression as almost the entire powerful Congress Press remained on the side of the Nationalists. The small damage that the agitation did was soon repaired by the externment of the Dogra Maharaja which restored the prestige of the Nationalist Government. But in 1952 Kashmir Muslim leaders grasped the real nature of Congress nationalism when

the Hindu public opinion in India vigorously championed the cause of the Praja Parishad. It will be recalled that N. Gopalaswami Ayyengar travelled all the way from Delhi to Jammu to get the Parishad leaders released in March 1952. Why was the Government of India so keenly interested in securing liberty for Parishad detenus ? Was it only because they had been kept behind the bars for holding views different from those held by the Nationalist leaders ? Was it with the laudable object of restoring civil liberty of the opponents of the Kashmir Government ? If so, why did not Ayyengar advise the Kashmir Government to release detenus belonging to other political parties such as Kisan Mazdoor Conference, Socialist Party and the Muslim Conference ? Their crime was no more heinous. But there was a big difference between the two categories of prisoners. The leaders of Praja Parishad despite their aggressive communalism and other differences with Congressmen subscribed to the fundamental and cardinal principles of Gandhian revivalist creed and had therefore to be protected. Others were either democrats or Muslim nationalists for whom there could be sympathy neither in the Indian Press nor in the ruling circles at New Delhi. Here was the picture of Hindu nationalism in its ugly and hideous but true colours.

Abdullah could hardly believe his eyes. This was more than even he could swallow and digest. He lost his temper and gave vent to his feelings he had too long suppressed. "Kashmir's accession to India will have to be of a restricted nature so long as communalism has a foothold on the soil of India", he ejaculated on April 10, 1952 in Ranbirsinghpura. "We are prepared to welcome application of India's Constitution to Kashmir in its entirety once we are satisfied that the grave of communalism has been finally dug in India. Of that we are not clear yet". In the gathering he made a clean breast of what was passing in his mind. "Some people here and in the Indian Press also have started questioning our very fundamental rights to shape our destiny in our own way. They do not tell us what will happen to Kashmir if there is resurgence of communalism in India and how under that circumstance we are to convince

the Muslims of Kashmir that India does not intend to swallow up Kashmir". In his eyes India was no longer secular; it was just like Pakistan and had to learn secularism from Kashmir Nationalists. "So far as Kashmir is concerned", Abdullah added, "it wants to preach the mission of secular democracy both to India and Pakistan".

The reaction in India to these outspoken views was sharp and strong. Had he persisted in expressing his feelings he would have forthwith lost office and personal liberty. But he was reluctant to give up power and his patrons were still unprepared to lose him. The breach was therefore immediately repaired by his admitting publicly on April 18 that his speech had been wrongly reported. "We acceded to India because Indian leadership is striving to lay the foundations of a secular democratic State", he reiterated. These words saved him from being ousted from office at the time. Nevertheless much mud was thrown at him by his erstwhile admirers. Now he had many grievances against his patrons and the Indian Press. One is worth mentioning. He said: "Certain quarters have not hesitated even to insinuate that I am being held in position and power with the aid of Indian money and bayonets. This is the unkindest cut of all". Only sixteen months later he realised that what his critics said was quite correct and he was all along living in a fool's paradise.

The disavowal of the Ranbirsinghpura speech did not pacify the aggrieved Hindu nationalism. It demanded greater offerings and the Kashmir leaders had to sign the Delhi Agreement. The provisions of that pact as already shown were a step towards integration of the State with India. Either Abdullah failed to fully understand the implications of the Agreement or he deliberately courted self-deception and purposefully misled his supporters and countrymen by giving a wholly wrong report about it on his return to Kashmir. "We are convinced," said he on August 11, addressing his Constituent Assembly on the provisions of the Agreement, "as ever before, that we have the full support both of the Government and the people of India in the fulfilment of our democratic ideals and the realisation of our objectives. This goodwill and amity, I

am sure, will result in the consolidation of freedom and democracy in our country. I may however emphasise that the supreme guarantee of our relationship with India is the identity of the democratic and secular aspirations which have guided the people of India as well as those of Jammu and Kashmir in their struggle for emancipation and before which all constitutional safeguards will take a secondary position".

The Delhi Agreement was disliked by Kashmiris and soon the Nationalists hesitated to implement those provisions of it which would have brought the State futher under the domination and suzerainty of the Central Government at New Delhi. That made their motives suspect in the eyes of Hindus and the third agitation of the Praja Parishad was launched in November 1952. During the course of this agitation Hindu Nationalism threw aside the mask of secularism and came out in its true colours. All differences between Congressmen and non-Congressmen as well as between Hindu nationalists and Hindu communalists were virtually obliterated. It is true that officially both the Government of India and the Congress organisation deprecated the agitation but there is no manner of doubt that Hindu India which includes Congress rank and file sympathised with the aims and aspirations of the Praja Parishad. The Nationalist leaders were hard put to it to defend their position. Abdullah had been accustomed to receive plaudits and bouquets whenever he ruthlessly suppressed Muslim Conferencites and Kashmir Socialists for advocating Kashmir's accession to Pakistan and for demanding freedom of expression. But now for dealing less harshly with the Dogra communalists he got stones and abuses. For those who knew the essence of Gandhian secularism and Congress nationalism there was nothing surprising in this. But to the opportunist Abdullah and his partymen it appeared something unexpected. However, due to fear of consequences and loss of power they still tenaciously held on.

The tragic episode of Shyama Prashad Mookerjee's death under detention took place at the end of June. This brought about the culmination in the fast developing union of the two

wings of Indian nationalism, extremists and moderates, against Kashmir Nationalists. Responsible Congressmen and even Indian Socialists no less than Jan Sangh leaders issued statements denouncing the Abdullah Government in scathing language. Base motives were imputed to them and it was openly alleged that Mookerjee had been deliberately done to death by the party in power in the State. In their emotional exuberance as well as under influence of communal bias Indians of all shades of opinion believed these charges to be well-founded.

The Nationalists were rudely shaken by the altered attitude of their Indian allies. For six years they had firmly believed that so long as Kashmir would remain with India whatever might happen to the State people and other political parties they themselves were destined to rule the country. It was the common belief that with Nehru as Prime Minister no power on earth could displace Abdullah as ruler of Kashmir. But the Praja Parishad agitation culminating in Mookerjee's death shattered that complacency. The Nationalists realised that it was not Nehru who was leading India towards the goal of secularism and democracy; it was Hindu India with its roots deep in religious philosophy which was dragging the idealist Prime Minister on the path of Brahminism. Therefore in the last resort good intentions of Uncle Nehru were of no value, and the State Muslims were at the mercy of aggressive Hindu nationalists. That dismal perspective began to loom large on the horizon before the Nationalist leaders of Kashmir at the dawn of the year 1953.

Another factor which frightened the Nationalists was the brighter prospect of friendship between India and Pakistan when Mohammed Ali came to power in the neighbouring country. His statesmanlike and conciliatory utterances coupled with his passion for peace created a good impression in India and the Nationalists became apprehensive that Kashmir dispute was about to be solved. It is clear to the Nationalists that owing to their enmity with Pakistan and the heinous crimes they have committed during the past ten years against the State

people, they will get no quarter in their own homeland if the country decides to accede to Pakistan. The new trend of public opinion in India discouraged the hope that they would be received as welcome political refugees in days of need. The Nationalists started reviewing their position and thinking afresh.

The National Conference was a sinking ship and like rats, one after another, the less important leaders began to desert it. The first to secede was Mohammed Umar Butt. He had served as secretary of Begum Abdullah for three years but was discharged in 1950. During the period in office he was among the trumpters of the Nationalist Government. When out of employ he threatened to join opposition. He was given another job. But again in 1952 he was turned out for unspecified reasons. Now in co-operation with a few other disgruntled Nationalists he founded the Awami Conference in May 1953. While praying for a settlement of the Kashmir dispute this group demanded that the Government of India should send a commission of inquiry to Kashmir "to audit the accounts of the loan which our Government has secured from the Indian Government." The Conference demanded freedom of Press and Association which had been suppressed by the "popular" Government.

In June 1953 another group of prominent workers led by Mohi-ud-Din Kara and Mir Waiz Gulam Nabi Hamadani broke away from the National Conference. Both of them had vehemently denounced Pakistan, opposed holding of a plebiscite and declared the State's accession to India as irrevocable. Kara had played a romantic role in the "Quit Kashmir" agitation by working underground and successfully evading the Maharaja's Police till the very day of Kak's downfall. When National Conference came to power and there was scramble for offices, he had, not entirely wrongly, expected to secure a high position. But he was not in the good books of Abdullah and therefore his ambitions remained unrealised. Then he turned towards communism but being irritable and peevish by nature he soon quarrelled with the more reputable and powerful comrades in the communist party. He next began to hover between the two ideologies of

Congress socialism and Muslim League communalism. During the days he would preach the former and under cover of darkness of nights he advocated the latter. In 1952 while speaking at a meeting of the Srinagar Bar Association which was held in honour of the visit of an eminent Indian lawyer, Mr. Katju, Mohi-ud-Din Kara complained against India for not making Kashmir an unit of the Republic like all B class States. But to the Muslim Conference leaders he assured his support for State's accession to Pakistan.

Mir Waiz Hamadani, a religious head of orthodox, obscurantist and anti-progressive views, has throughout his life been a supporter of the Nationalists and was behind the bars for some months in connection with the "Quit Kashmir" agitation. In recognition of his services his brother was made a *tehsildar* in the Revenue Department. In that capacity he is alleged to have looted poor people and when complaints reached the Government from all sides he was dismissed. The Mir Waiz intervened but the Government refused to help.

Early in June 1953 Kara and Mir Waiz Hamadani joined hands and together with some more disillusioned and disgruntled Nationalist workers founded the Kashmir Political Conference. At the close of the month a public meeting was held in Srinagar where, on behalf of the leaders of the Conference, Kara read a statement demanding that the Indian Armies be withdrawn from Kashmir and an early plebiscite held to end the accession dispute. The statement made trenchent criticism of the working of the administration, blamed the Nationalists for smothering democracy and for corruption, jobbery and nepotism. Slogans like *Pakistan Zindabad* and *Azad Kashmir Zindabad* were raised by the audience and when the meeting ended groups of people went in diverse directions throughout the city shouting the same slogans. The forces of resistance against the imposed Nationalist Government and Indian imperialism immediately took the situation in their hands. Big demonstrations were held in the city demanding withdrawal of foreign troops from all parts of the State, dissolution of the Nationalist Government and holding of an early plebiscite to settle the accession dispute. On June 27, all the members of the working committee

of the newly born Political Conference, including Kara, Mir Waiz Hamadani, Abdul Latif and Rugh Nath Vaishnavi were arrested. There was great excitement and under the impact of rapidly changing political conditions the National Conference disintegrated.

Sharp differences of opinion arose among the members of the working committee of the National Conference which soon brought the State Cabinet within its orbit. While one group, mainly composed of Hindus and Sikhs led by Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed, adhered to the view that Kashmir should continue to remain with India, Abdullah and the rest began to cast doubts if this union could be maintained or could prove conducive to progress and prosperity of the State people. For months Abdullah had been wavering in his views. Asked at a public meeting in Madras on January 20, 1953 whether Kashmir would vote for India if and when a plebiscite was held under U.N. auspices he replied: "In this matter I believe we should strive towards a just principle and for truth. If you think that Abdullah is fighting for human brotherhood, you must help him. Even if you lose, you lose for a right cause". Explaining the reasons of his doubts he stated: "Nobody can predict what will be the future of Kashmir, but in this struggle the only weapon is the united will of the people that can save Kashmir and Jammu who have been together fighting the forces of reaction of Pakistan. If one section (Jammu) thinks of its self-preservation how can the fight be carried on?" But Abdullah still believed then that "it was in Kashmir's interest to ally with a neighbour and she had already decided who it should be. That decision was taken on grounds of identical ideological interests. It was impossible for Kashmir to be alone and unprotected. There was the example of Korea".

The wavering and vascillating mind of Abdullah became confused when Mookerjee entered Kashmir without permit to support the Praja Parishad agitation and when the Hindu India including the Nationalist Press applauded the move. State's accession to India appeared to him to be fraught with grave and dangerous consequences for Kashmir Muslims. For obvious

reasons he could not entertain the idea of Kashmir joining Pakistan. The independence of Kashmir he had himself frequently denounced as dangerous. Therefore he began to grope in the dark and by his utterances confounded his confused admirers. "Every one, including his private Secretaries, former Cabinet colleagues and members of the working committee agrees", writes the Special Representative of the *Statesman*, "that a remarkable change came over Sheikh Abdullah from the beginning of May. This was reflected in his conduct and his speeches. Ideas which he had earlier given only passing expression appeared to have developed into an obssession". Abdullah had lost faith in India and wanted to evolve a new relationship with that country. He called a meeting of the working committee on May 18 and discussed his changed views with his colleagues during the next seven days. He hinted at the possibility of keeping Kashmir independent. He persuaded the Committee to adopt some unanimous decision but the differences could not be resolved. Hearing reports of Abdullah's changed front Nehru arrived in Srinagar on the eve of his departure for London in the last week of May. The Prime Minister of India addressed the Conference working committee and dwelt at length on the dangers of establishing an independent Valley and on the benefits that the Muslims in the State as well as in India could derive if Kashmir remained with India. But Abdullah was completely unmoved and when the working committee met again it became clear that the rupture was unhealed.

In order to vanquish his opponents in the National Conference Abdullah began to befriend the people he had suppressed for six years. He started giving himself expression to the criticism of State's accession to India which he had mercilessly hushed since he had come to power. He scandalised his patrons by plain speaking and by many public confessions which were too true and therefore placed the leaders of the Congress and the Government of India in an embarrassing position. "In few and simple words", he announced from Radio Kashmir on Id day, the June 14, "the Hindu communalists want that the part of the State on this side of the cease-fire line should complete-

ly merge with India and the Indian Constitution should be imposed on it. But the large majority of Kashmir people are not prepared to go beyond the conditions on which they have acceded to India. The fight is between integration and accession. The communalists want to achieve their desire by force. How far they can succeed it is for the State people to reply". He was told that his utterances were not liked by the Hindus and Congressmen and that it was he who had brought about the State's accession to India. "I have committed mistakes even blunders in the past", he publicly confessed, "but I am not prepared to betray my people". Abdullah paid a tribute to Mohammed Ali's friendly statements which brought about a "pleasant change" in the Indo-Pakistan relations. "Every well-wisher of Kashmir should pray that talks between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan may bear fruit and result in restoration of friendly relations between the two countries".

The more hostile Indian opinion became to the Nationalists after Mookerjee's death the more bitter and outspoken Abdullah grew in expression of his views. He resented the statement of Nehru appealing to Hindu communalists to withdraw the Parishad agitation and sympathising with theDogras who had suffered. "With great regret I must confess", he told a gathering of Conference workers on July 11, "that I do not see even one man in India who could guarantee that the relationship subsisting between the State and the Centre on the basis of conditions for accession can remain unaltered in future. If some Indian leaders opposed the Parishad agitation they only said that the aim of Parishad is good but the method of attaining it is wrong. Not only most of the Urdu papers but also journals in English language have supported this view. There is no leader in India who has upheld the existing relationship between India and Kashmir". Abdullah was not satisfied with the withdrawal of the Jammu agitation. "Though the Parishad agitation has ceased the conflict of ideals and interests created by it remains", he observed. "The demand for the merger of the State with India is still there. And so long as these aims exist the sword will hang over the basic relationship between India and Kashmir.

This is a serious matter". On Martyrs Day, July 13, Abdullah went still further. Addressing a public gathering he levelled the grave charge that "India does not appear to be prepared to give the right of self-determination to Kashmir so long as she is not fully convinced that the public opinion will support her". In this speech he declared: "If I find that we can progress and prosper by remaining independent, I will not hesitate to raise that voice. If I realize that by acceding to Pakistan we can go forward no power can suppress me to say so".

On July 24 Abdullah publicly complained in a meeting of the workers that Muslims were not getting a fair deal in matter of recruitment in the three departments which had been handed over to the Centre. "We have to see how many Muslims were there in the Operational Command and the Administrative Command of the State Forces at the time we acceded to India and how many are there now. How many Muslims have been recruited during the last six years and how many non-Muslims". He asked questions about the Posts and Telegraphs Department also. "I had told my people that their interests are safe in India. But educated unemployed Muslims look towards Pakistan because while their Hindu compatriots find avenues in India open for them, they (Muslims) are debarred from getting Government services. When I point out these difficulties I am dubbed as a communalist".

Similar damaging views were expressed and sensational confessions made by Mirza Afzal Beg, Revenue Minister, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Hamadani, Deputy Development Minister, Mubarak Shah, Deputy Revenue Minister, and all others who agreed with the new line adopted by their leader. That Abdullah and his close followers were thoroughly embittered and disillusioned about their future if Kashmir remained with India there can be no doubt. But that they had chalked out any clear path or even visualised a definite goal after breaking with their patrons is more than doubtful. It is true Abdullah occasionally stated that the alternative before the State people was not only accession to India or Pakistan but they could also think of a third possibility—to remain independent; but he never gave

a clear-cut verdict on the subject. If all his utterances during the period are taken into consideration it will be seen that he had not yet altogether abandoned his desire to keep Kashmir with India. "So far as we are concerned we have full faith in secularism", he declared on July 25 while addressing a workers rally. "We want justice for all alike. Why did Kashmiri Muslim set his face against Pakistan? It is because of his belief that his interests are safe in India and that he will get a fair deal. If that belief is deliberately sought to be shaken what can I do about it ?" He added: "I firmly believe that the edifice of Indo-Kashmir relationship could not be built on a shaky foundation. When I say so many appear to read in it an inclination on my part towards Pakistan which is not fair". He reiterated his oft-expressed views about Pakistan in the meeting by saying: "Pakistan wanted to enslave Kashmir by use of force. It was at that time that Kashmir had asked India for help and to enable her to accede to their request accession had taken place. India had not forced Kashmir into the existing relationship. It was on the basis of common ideals and human values that the State willingly entered into this relationship. It were Gandhiji's high ideals for which he laid down even his life that made us to seek a union with India". To those who accused him of breaking pledges and resiling from the position he held for six years Abdullah replied : "The communal happenings of last year have shaken the foundation of our relationship. The responsibility for this does not lie at our door but of those sections in India who are attempting to force the State to merge with India. It should be remembered in this connection that none of us has ever spoken a word against the Instrument of Accession on which our relationship is based or for that matter against the Delhi Agreement. If there is any opposition to the existing relationship it comes from certain sections of India itself. The confidence created by the National Conference in the people here on the basis of the Instrument of Accession and the Delhi Agreement has been rudely shaken by the hostile attitude of the Jan Sangh and other communal organisations in India".

Many base motives have been imputed to Abdullah for

becoming critical of India's politics and policies. But any one well acquainted with his past can say that he was most probably using pressure tactics which had proved helpful to him on several previous occasions to save face before his extremist followers who had begun to betray signs of restiveness due to Praja Parishad agitation. Abdullah is a demagogue and a great lover of power. He has the infinite capacity to bully and threaten and finally to eat his own words. A categorical statement from the Prime Minister of India condemning Hindu communalism and assuring the Nationalists that in no case would the existing relationship between India and Kashmir undergo any change, unless the Nationalists leaders agreed to it, would have pacified him. And possibly he was expecting this much favour from his old friend and patron, Nehru. But 1953 was not 1947 or even 1952. In July 1953 public opinion in India was hardly likely to reconcile itself to any countenancing of Abdullah's stiff attitude on Kashmir's integration with India. Besides, the morbidly ambitious right hand man of Abdullah, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed, was keeping constant vigil that the rising tempo of displeasure and disgust among Hindu politicians and the Government of India circles against the "Lion of Kashmir" was rapidly pushed up to a crescendo in order that he might himself replace Abdullah.

Bakhshi and his hirelings carried tales to all concerned about the real and imaginary conspiracies that Abdullah was hatching to destroy the union of India with Kashmir. He did not even hesitate to come to terms with the Hindu communalists and reactionaries. He met the Parishad leader, Prem Nath Dogra, and some of his trusted comrades at New Delhi and had prolonged talks with them. "Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed has given assurances to the Parishad", disclosed Dogra, speaking at a Press conference in Lucknow on July 19, "that steps would be taken before October to remove barriers that stand in the way of further unity between Kashmir and the rest of India". The details of what transpired at these talks between Bakhshi and Dogra were not given out. But it is alleged that ways and means to bring about the fall of Abdullah were discussed and

planned in the meeting. "The conscience of the whole country", said the Parishad Chief triumphantly in a statement on July 28, "including the powers that be in New Delhi has been stirred and they have realized and admitted the justice of our cause and the patriotic motives that impelled us to launch our *satyagraha*. It is clear victory for us". Dogra was no longer against all Nationalists. "The whole India has now awakened to the danger of systematic separatism of some Kashmiri politicians. It is now admitted that our movement was neither communal nor reactionary but was the outcome of a patriotic urge of the people of the State to be one with India".

Abdullah decided to secure the verdict of the general council of the National Conference on his new line. He called a meeting of the working committee and the general council on August 24 and 26 respectively and declared that he would disclose the details of his future programme on August 21, the Id day, before his countrymen.

Meanwhile, by the end of July anti-Abdullah propaganda was on white heat in the Indian Press. Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed took the fullest advantage of it to make himself popular among the agitated and indignant Hindus. He told them that what Abdullah was reluctant to do he would accomplish unhesitatingly at any cost. "Since Kashmir voluntarily decided to become part of India", declared Bakhshi in a meeting at Kulgam on July 29, "nothing has happened to alter our faith in the correctness of our decision. Large majority of our people continue to stand by that decision and I have no doubt that they will defend the decision against any attacks that may emanate from any quarter within or without the State". Perhaps not sure of the result of the tussle for supremacy the treacherous opportunist continued to acknowledge the leadership of Abdullah publicly. "Islam ordains that every Mussalman", said Bakhshi in a meeting of the workers, "must cherish faith in five cardinal principles. But I have a sixth principle as well. I have complete faith in the leadership of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah. If I have to go on the gallows for it I am prepared".

Time had now ripened for the Communists to come out in their true colours. Nothing is too low for these people to pull down an ally if he does not suit their purpose. For years they had owned Abdullah as the true representative of the masses, Hindu as well as Muslim. In Jammu they opposed the Praja Parishad in 1947-52 as a reactionary body composed of feudalist elements. But when the Parishad agitation caught the imagination of the Dogras the Communists all of a sudden changed colours and started supporting the essence of the Parishad demand. Dhanwantri, a Communist leader of Jammu, criticised the National Conference for not conceding the right of self-determination to Dogras. The Nationalists were disturbed and Abdullah warned the Communists to keep their hands off the National Conference. The Jammu Communists were about to form a separate organisation when the big political crisis developed in the Valley which obviated the necessity of taking the step.

The rift in the Nationalist ranks encouraged the Communists to implement their designs of bringing about the fall of Abdullah. They lost no time to hatch a conspiracy with Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed. F.or outside prominent Communists like Dr. K. M. Ashraf, Z. A. Ahmed, Sardar Jaffery and many others came hurrying to Srinagar. So long as the Reds were in the good books of Abdullah there never was any love lost between them and Bakhshi but opportunism makes strange bed fellows. Bakhshi and Communists needed each other now and so the unholy alliance was formed. Within a few days the Communists shifted their allegiance to Bakhshi. They deserted Abdullah and began to denounce him as a lackey of foreign imperialism, an enemy of the country and a renegade.

The lamentations of Abdullah against the rise of aggressive communal forces in India on the one side and the offer of Bakhshi backed by the Communists to integrate Kashmir with India on the other sharpened the clash which enveloped every sphere of public life in the State. The officialdom did not remain unaffected. There were debates on the roadside, in the shops, restaurants, schools and offices in which partisan crowds participated. The political situation was deteriorating from

day to day. It was clear that if it came to a showdown between the two leaders Imperialist India would support Bakhshi. The Central Government at New Delhi urgently summoned Yuvraj Karan Singh to the capital and presumably gave him detailed instructions how he will be expected to act when and if the tussle ended in a showdown. It is not surprising that the Yuvraj took Bakhshi into his confidence and revealed to him the instructions of the Government of India. Both were determined to oust Abdullah. For, only a few days later, on August 6, Shyamlal Saraf, Development Minister (nicknamed for ten years as "humble servant of Abdullah"), instigated by Bakhshi, adopted in a Cabinet meeting a defiant attitude against the Prime Minister. Abdullah felt irritated and in his anger demanded resignation from Saraf. This he refused to do. The crisis deepened.

Now Bakhshi put his plan into operation. There were five members in the Cabinet, three Muslim and two Hindu. Abdullah was supported only by Afzal Beg, the two Hindus remained on the side of Bakhshi. Next day on August 7, the three members of the Cabinet, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed, Girdharilal Dogra and Shyamlal Saraf, despatched a memorandum to Abdullah in which they charged him with having consistently refused to acknowledge his responsibilities as Prime Minister by not following the declared policies that formed the basis of the Government. Shyamlal Saraf separately sent a letter to Abdullah telling him why he refused to resign. Copies of both, the memorandum and Saraf's letter, were submitted to the Yuvraj, Head of the State. The copies reached Karan Singh long before they were received by Abdullah. Immediately in a pre-planned manner the Dogra Prince summoned his Prime Minister and had a talk with him for about half an hour. According to the officially inspired version of what transpired at the meeting "the Head of the State impressed on the Prime Minister the immediate necessity for restoring harmony and unity of purpose in the Government". The Yuvraj "suggested to Abdullah that perhaps a meeting of the whole Cabinet at the Sadr-i-Riyasat's residence for a frank and free discussion might

be helpful to solve the differences but it was not acceptable to the Sheikh". Hardly had Abdullah left the palace when the Dogra Prince issued an order dismissing the Abdullah Cabinet. Probably the order had been written and signed before the meeting was held; perhaps it was lying in the confidential tray of the Yuvraj since he had returned from Delhi a fortnight ago.

After meeting Yuvraj Karan Singh Abdullah, accompanied by two of his colleagues, went to Gulmarg the same afternoon. Little could he imagine that the Yuvraj whom he had generously managed to get elected Head of the State could have the courage to dismiss him. But before the next daybreak, shortly after 4 a.m. on August 9, he was most astonished when the police knocked at his door and awakened him from deep sleep and presented him with a warrant of arrest. "First he read", wrote the Special Correspondent of the *Statesman*, "Mr. Saraf's letter in which he refused to resign from the Cabinet. Then the Sheikh was handed the joint letter (memorandum) from three Cabinet colleagues accusing him of inefficiency and recounting their differences with him. The third letter was from the Sadr-i-Riyasat dissolving Sheikh Abdullah's Cabinet and dismissing him from Prime Ministership. The last letter delivered the most serious blow. He was under arrest".

In his letter to Abdullah dismissing him from Prime Ministership, the Yuvraj expressed "deep concern at the serious differences which exist in the Cabinet" and "the great confusion and the apprehension that the conflict within the Cabinet has been causing". Referring to the memorandum of the three members of the Cabinet the Yuvraj said : "This document clearly indicates that the divergence within your Cabinet had reached proportions in which the unity, prosperity and stability of the State are gravely jeopardised".

That the Head of the State recognised as such by Abdullah himself had the constitutional right to dismiss his Cabinet when he was convinced that the functions of the State were not conducted efficiently very few people will contest. But normally the Yuvraj should have next tried to find out after consulting prominent members of the Constitutent Assembly

(however unrepresentative they might have been of the people) whether or not Abdullah still commanded the majority in the House. But in a country where democratic practices had been honoured more in breach than in observance and where high handedness is the only law known at present, the Yuvraj sent another letter to Bakhshi, simultaneously with his letter to Abdullah, inviting him to accept the Prime Ministership. Bakhshi was sworn in at the palace and declared the new Premier at the very moment when police were knocking at the door of Abdullah's Gulmarg house. The indecent haste with which the whole affair was conducted was enough to throw a veil of suspicion over it. But what could the Dogra boy do ? He must have orders to act likewise. "I should like to repeat", amusingly stated Nehru in the Indian Parliament on August 10, "that we have considered these recent developments in Kashmir as an internal matter with which we should interfere as little as possible". He was asking the world to believe that the 22-year-old Sadr-i-Riyasat acted in such an extremely important matter on his own. "When apples fall on a calm day", observed *The Daily Telegraph* of London on August 11, "it is rather difficult to believe the small boy who pleads that it was not he who shook the tree but the wind. In the same way the events of the past few days in Kashmir have been so dramatic and so uniformly favourable to India that it is difficult wholly to credit Mr. Nehru's unctuous utterances that he had nothing whatever to do with them".

Bakhshi and his supporters have claimed that the majority of the National Conference leaders and workers were against Abdullah's new line. If so, nothing would have been lost by postponing the arrest of Abdullah and the formation of new Government till August 26, when the general council of the Conference was to meet to deliberate over the differences. An extraordinary session of the Constituent Assembly could have been summoned to pronounce its judgment on the issue. Instead of taking that right course not only was Abdullah arrested but along with him all his supporters numbering about a hundred were consigned to prison. The Yuvraj did not even give Abdullah

five minutes freedom to read the letter of dismissal and send a reply to it if the ex-Prime Minister desired to do so. He was dismissed, gagged and put under arrest within a few seconds Among those detained were Afzal Beg, Revenue Minister, Janki Nath Zutshi, Director-General Information and Broadcasting, Kashyap Bandhu, Director-General Rural Reconstruction, Gulam Qadir Beg, Registrar Co-operatives, G.A.Ashai, Registrar, Kashmir University, Baldev Prashad Sharma, Chief Information Officer, Sham Lal, Director, Vicitors Bureau, some other officials and about thirty members of the Constituent Assembly.

While being escorted by the police from Gulmarg to Udhampur where he was kept in detention Abdullah must have fully grasped the true essence of freedom he had brought for his homeland and about which he often used to wax eloquent during the past six years. He must have been remorsefully brooding over his crimes against Kashmir democracy and how for mere expression of views he had trodden over thousands of fighters for freedom. Or perhaps his mind did not travel that way and he was regretting why he brought the matters to a head and did not heed the warnings of the Indian leaders and the Congress Press. Notorious for retracing steps he might have been contemplating an honourable rapprochement with his Congress patrons. But if he had entertained the belief that Indian imperialism could not lay its hands upon his person he must have been rudely disillusioned. Had he read the history of his homeland he would have easily compared himself with Nazuk Shah whom the Mughals upheld as the rightful claimant to the throne to deceive Kashmir nationalism and to occupy the Valley but having achieved that objective put the puppet aside and declared Mohammed Shah, another claimant, as the king.

Abdullah could not complain against the anti-democratic and the unconstitutional procedure adopted by the Dogra Sadr-i-Riyasat. For six years he had himself used reprehensible methods in dealing with opposition. He had throttled public opinion, persecuted his political adversaries, abused, disgraced and trampled upon them. Now the time had come for him to suffer the same indignities. Nemesis was in full operation and

he was caught in the net woven by himself. There was not a soul outside the ranks of his few hundred personal followers who was prepared to drop a tear for his tragic fate. The melodrama of his summary dismissal and unceremonious arrest only showed that treachery to democracy did not always pay in the long run.

Nevertheless the autocratic manner in which Karan Singh appointed his new Cabinet was a challenge to democracy and a rude reminder to the Kashmir people that they were still living under the despotism of alien Dogra rule which enjoyed now the powerful backing of the reactionary and imperialist Hindu India. The country was already simmering with discontent and the people were enraged as a result of the atrocities of the Nationalists and the intransigence of the Indian Government regarding a peaceful settlement of the accession dispute. No sooner the news of the swearing-in ceremony of the new Cabinet was received by the people than hostile demonstrations on an unprecedented scale were held throughout the Valley. These were savagely put down by the combined forces of Armed Police, State Militia and the Central Reserved Police contingents of which were spread and stationed in every part of Kashmir. Prominent leaders and workers of the Socialist Party, Kisan Mazdoor Conference and the Muslim Conference numbering hundreds were arrested and mostly lodged in Jammu prisons. At scores of places public meetings and processions were dispersed violently by *lathi* charges and tear gas. When even these could not beat down the spirit of resistance of the brave fighters for freedom bullets were showered on unarmed Kashmiris at Amirakadal, Zainakadal, Anantnag, Qazi Gund, Tral, Kulgam, Pattan and some other places within a week of the installation of Bakhshi as the Prime Minister. Nehru denied that the Indian Military was involved in these operations in any way. But eye witnesses like James Burke, the Special Correspondent of the famous American magazine *Life*, who was present on the spot on that fateful day, reported : "Indian troops in battle dress and helmeted police reinforcements moved into line and opened fire".

It is not possible to say exactly how many were killed and wounded but it is believed that not less than a hundred people lost their lives. The Kashmir Government had given out that only nine pepole were killed. Prime Minister Nehru, in his address to the Congress Party in Parliament on August 25, regretted that rumours were being spread that hundreds or thousands of people had been killed during the disturbances and change over of administration in the State. "These are entirely baseless", said he. "The figure of those killed is only about thirty". Mark that word "only" ! In 1946 at the death of two Kashmiris he had declared Srinagar to be a city of the dead. Now "only" thirty were killed and Nehru had no word of sympathy for the victims or their kith and kin. Party politics dehumanises even a cultured and educated man. Among the killed, wounded or arrested were the members of all the communities, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, thus once again giving the lie to the charge that the Freedom Movement in Kashmir was communal or that the fight was between Hindus on the one side and Muslims on the other.

For many days complete *hartal* was observed not only in Srinagar but in all big towns in the Valley. In the city no tonga was seen on the streets and even the boatmen—for the first time in Kashmir history—refused to come out and ply *shikaras* on the Vitasta. The spontaneous and impressive demonstrations and the intensity of sullenness and enmity towards the new regime was unknown in the annals of the land. For many weeks the resistance showed no signs of slackening but what could unarmed Kashmiris do against the formidable forces of Indian imperialism ? How long could they stand against it ?

In their anger and fury which Hindus all over India exhibited against the National Conference at the death of Shyama Prashad Mookerjee they did not make any distinction between one leader and another of the National Conference. All of them were equally accused and denounced for inefficiency, corruption, high handedness, jobbery and totalitarianism. But when Bakhshi, in co-operation with the Hindu reactionaries and communalists, treacherously stabbed his leader in the back and

got himself installed in power as Prime Minister the mouths of all the guns of hostile propaganda were turned on Abdullah alone. Overnight one became paragon of virtues and other devil of the drama. Indian reaction was feverishly in search of a scapegoat and it found one in the person of the "Lion of Kashmir" There was no abuse which was not heaped upon the head of Abdullah. His virtues were forgotten and his frailties remembered. To lower him in the estimation of the people became the rage of the Indian publicists and patriots. Dr. D. Pant, a member of the Lucknow University Court, went to the length of demanding from the Vice-Chancellor that the honorary Degree of Doctorate granted to Abdullah in 1949 be cancelled as it was conferred on him for political reasons which did not exist any more. Even intellectuals had thrown aside the cover that hide their intentions. Yuvraj Karan Singh who had lavished fulsome praise on the fallen premier for six years said on December 8, that Abdullah Cabinet "spent all its time in weaving webs of fantastic political intrigues". All parties in India hailed the new Government as the truly representative of the people. Hindu Mahasabha and Jan Sangh leaders were foremost in giving their blessings and in advising the State Hindus to support it.

Having placed Abdullah and his associates behind lock and key Bakhshi started a virulent propaganda against them in the hospitable columns of the Indian Press. To drown the voice of sanity and liberalism that might have been raised from some quarters in the country criticising the most shabby and objectionable manner in which the old Government was dismissed, the new Government installed and prominent Nationalist leaders put under arrest, the fib was widely spread that the arrested people were establishing foreign contacts of a kind dangerous to the peace and prosperity of the State. It was asserted that Abdullah was determined to declare independence of the Valley and for doing so had secured promises of fabulous amounts from American Government through Adlai Stevenson the Democratic leader of U.S.A. who visited Kashmir with the consent of the Indian Government in winter 1953. It was a fantastic charge

not even worthy of consideration. For, to the dullest understanding it was obvious that the American Government would not even touch such a plan without the fullest knowledge and agreement of India. No sensible American leader would like to have the friendship of discredited Abdullah at the cost of powerful Nehru's indignation. Besides, how could Abdullah establish Independent Kashmir so long as the huge Indian armies were in occupation of the Valley? Yet there is hardly any leading paper in India which did not publish the report about the fib under big headlines and devoted columns after columns to its discussion.

On August 15, Adlai Stevenson denied that "he offered any suggestion about Kashmir during his visit to Srinagar or gave any assurances either as representative of the U.S. Government or as a private citizen". On the same day the U.S. Embassy in Delhi demanded from the Indian Government that "if there were any evidence whatsoever seeming to point to interference by the U. S. A. in the internal affairs of Kashmir such evidences should be fully brought to light". Communist Sadiq, President of the Constituent Assembly and an accomplice of Bakhshi in his treachery to Abdullah, had a few days earlier announced that "they were in possession of important papers bearing on the conspiracy". But nothing has been published so far and the hysterical cries of foreign intervention are still resounding throughout the length and breadth of the vast territories of the Indian Republic.

In this connection it is interesting to note that the Communists were foremost in raising the bogey of American Imperialism in the State. It has been the misfortune of Abdullah that from time to time due to his poor intellectual capacity he has come under the influence of personalities and cliques who have used him as their cat's paw. It is well known that for many years before and after he came to power he was led and guided by the Communists. Apart from advising him to implement the land reforms, scale down debts and form multipurpose societies in a manner which ruined the State economy as discussed earlier it were the Communists who convinced him that Kashmir could progress and prosper by remaining aloof

from Pakistan as well as India and by establishing its independence. In 1949 it was primarily at the advice of the Communists that Abdullah and his colleagues insisted upon a special status for the State in the Constitution which was granted by the Constituent Assembly of India. At that time the Communists were sure that Kashmir being next door neighbour of both Soviet Russia and Red China could become a springboard for Communism jumping from where the whole subcontinent could be conquered. But by 1953 Communists like so many others before them had lost the confidence of Abdullah and now Independent Kashmir had no charm for them. Foreign intervention if it comes from Russia or China is most welcome to them but not otherwise. That is the essence of the political philosophy of the Indian Communists.

It is, however, not so much in the charge of "establishing foreign contacts" against Abdullah Government that we are interested as in what Bakhshi and the Indian leaders are saying about the economy and the administration of the State during the past six years. With one voice every leftist, every Congress leader and every reputable journal in India almost till the day of dismissal of Abdullah Cabinet had been asserting that the State people had made marvellous progress under the "popular" regime. Time and again did Nehru affirm in Parliament and outside, wherever he got a chance to do so, that Kashmiris had not enjoyed such freedom and prosperity for many centuries as they were doing since October 1947. Then suddenly as if by some magic the whole picture changed and everything became dark and dismal in the Happy Valley.

On the day Bakhshi assumed charge of his onerous office he broadcast a speech from Radio Kashmir in which he admitted that "our agrarian reforms, though sound on principle, do not seem to have aroused the enthusiasm of the masses" and "the co-operative movement which might have inspired the people towards voluntary efforts for the reconstruction of our national economy became a symbol of tyranny in the countryside". On August 10, Bakhshi said : "Hitherto people had not benefited. In fact their condition had sunk to the lowest level". He was

more explicit on the subject in his public speech in Jammu on August 23. "During the past six years", he confessed, "many promises had been made but nothing actually has been accomplished. Corruption that is rampant in the State cannot equal anything during the last 150 years". Admitting the failure of the economic programme carried out during the Nationalist regime he said : "Landlordism has been finished, but it has been done in a way which pleased neither the tillers nor the landlords. Similarly elimination of debts relieved neither the debtors nor the moneylenders. Our food policy was such that it created differences between city dwellers and villagers. All this showed that there was something wrong with the economic programme." And who was responsibe for this corruption, inefficiency and bungling ? Why, of course Abdullah. "This was because," Bakhshi declared, "the administration was corrupt and Sheikh Abdullah had kept on changing his plans and programmes and never gave time for any policy to be tried".

With the fullest co-operation of the powerful Indian Press Bakhshi has been throwing as much mud on his erstwhile leader and colleagues as he can. He has gone to ludicrous lengths in doing so. In one of his public speeches in Mujahid Manzil on December 3, 1953, according to *Martand*, he said : "Owing to wrong food policy adopted by Mirza Afzal Beg there were signs of famine in our country; irrigation system was ruined and such conditions were witnessed that though Zaingir Canal was constructed yet no water flowed through it for the last three years". It was a surprising charge as the Irrigation Department was under Bakhshi from the day Nationalists came to power till the downfall of the Abdullah Government.

Had Bakhshi not been with Abdullah as his powerful deputy in the Government for the whole period from October 1947 to the day of Abdullah's dismissal this argument might have appeared sound. But it is known to every schoolboy that while Abdullah was totally absorbed in the foreign affairs and the accession dispute Bakhshi was in virtual and sole command of the Administration. Without his knowledge and approval no change could be effected in the policy of the Government.

As Minister in charge of law and order it was he who was responsible for the suppression of the people including the Dogra Hindus. Out of the five members of the Abdullah Government the majority of three continues to be in the new Cabinet. These Ministers were there in the Government right from the day the Nationalists came to power in October 1947. The wrong policies, inefficiency and corruption referred to by Bakhshi did not crop up abruptly and must have been there for years. They did not grow and destroy the economy within the past month or so since the differences arose in the Cabinet. Why were the three Ministers conniving at the destructive activities of Abdullah ? In fairness it should be the three Ministers who continue to be in the new Government and not the two who have been dismissed and imprisoned who should be held responsible for all the wrongs done during the Nationalist regime. It should not also be forgotten that some of the departments such as Irrigation, Roads and Buildings, Transport, Emporia and Police where corruption has been most rampant, have all along been in charge of Bakhshi.

But since Bakhshi is the new darling of Indian Imperialism such questions are neither raised nor answered in this country. The new Prime Minister states that the old Prime Minister was responsible for corruption, inefficiency and economic ruin; it is presumed that the statement will be accepted as a fact by the prejudiced Indians.

Having beaten down the rising and rebellious spirit of Kashmir by *lathis* and bullets Bakhshi, under protection of the Indian Army, began to consolidate his power. In the months of September and October he arranged regional conventions of the Nationalist workers at different towns in the Valley beginning with Srinagar. Bakhshi was fully acquainted with the real mettle of these workers. During his whole political career Abdullah has never tolerated a critic or a man of independent; bold and daring views in the organisation which had become an abode for parasites, sychophants; flatterers and yesmen. Since October 1947 the National Conference was also stuffed with power-hunters and careerists. It was not surprising therefore that

most of those men who had seemingly supported throughout summer the line adopted by Abdullah promptly changed sides immediately after the Lion of Kashmir had been put inside the cage at Udhampur. The desertion was unseemly no less than an eye-opener. Those prominent Nationalists who had been singing praises of Abdullah till the very moment of his arrest unabashedly raised full-throated slogans to support Bakhshi. Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Hamadani, Deputy Development Minister in Abdullah Cabinet, who declared on the eve of the fateful August 9, that "every Kashmiri would die fighting under the leadership of the Lion of Kashmir till the last," moved a resolution in the Srinagar convention on September 26, expressing confidence in the new Government. He said : "After six years of our struggle time came when certain speeches by some of our leaders led to disruption and disunity among the people and National Conference workers endangering peace of the country". A few days later on September 29, Hamadani in a public meeting congratulated Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed "for changing the conditions in the State in seven weeks by revolutionary economic methods". Bakhshi took the fullest advantage of the shameful opportunism of the Nationalists. By threats, by blandishments and by distribution of loaves and fishes of office among the power-hungry Nationalists he brought many of them to his side. Of course the Communists got the biggest share of the spoils. They were not only included in the Cabinet, they were also appointed as Deputy Ministers, Secretaries and officials holding key positions in the administration as well as the National Conference organisation.

Bakhshi made the Buddhist Kushok Bakula (who knows only Bodhi language) as a Deputy Minister and the Head Lama certified on November 25, that "as far as Ladakh is concerned we are determined to give our full support and co-operation to the new Prime Minister".

It must have been very agonising to Abdullah to learn behind bars how within two months following his dismissal most of those who had solemnly owed allegiance to him one by one deserted his side. It appeared that he was passing

through a serious mental conflict; he was involved in a spiritual crisis. But he was still groping in the dark.

Forgetting the shabby treatment that he had received at the hands of the Government of India through the Yuvraj, he, naively enough, wrote a letter to Nehru requesting him that he may be allowed to attend the session of the Constituent Assembly which, it had been announced, was to meet in the beginning of October. Presumably Abdullah wanted to state his case before the House. Anyone conversant with the rudiments of politics could foretell what response the detenu could expect to his demand. Nehru forwarded the letter to the president of the Constituent Assembly who curtly turned down the request.

Bereft of power and in calm atmosphere of the prison Abdullah appears to have realised that those who disagreed with him were not after all in the wrong in all that they used to say. He therefore desired to know the views of his opponents and critics. I was agreeably surprised when one day I found a brief note from him in my mail which he had despatched from Udhampur Sub-Jail on November 11. He wanted me to send him the books I have written on Kashmir politics during the past twelve years. "I have ample time nowadays to read books", he said. I despatched a post parcel containing four of my publications—(1) *Inside Kashmir*, (2) *Azad Kashmir*, (3) *Whither India?* and (4) *Abdul Ahad Azad—POET OF HUMANISM*. But the parcel was refused and returned by the jail authorities presumably under instructions from the Kashmir Government. Only a few days earlier a spokesman of the Kashmir Government had stated that "Sheikh Abdullah was afforded all facilities to read and write".

Like thousands of his compatriots Abdullah is now a victim of persecution for speaking the truth. Nearly twenty-two years ago we started together on a great and sacred pilgrimage but before we had reached our destination we parted company in January 1941. I believed he took a wrong and dangerous path. It therefore became my painful duty to examine and criticise his sayings and doings during the past thirteen years. Repeatedly I beckoned Abdullah of pitfalls in the path of Gandhian nationa-

lism. I cautioned him against the time-servers and power-hungry men whom he had collected around himself. As late as on April 21, 1950 when he, as Prime Minister, came to visit the Udhampur Sub-Jail (where I was lodged as a detenu) and had discussions with me for nearly three hours I warned him against the conspiracies hatched by Bakhshi and dangers ahead but recklessly he continued to follow the suicidal course. Very often his blind admirers and not infrequently he too, complained that in my remarks and observations I was guided more by personal motives than by any high principles or patriotic views. I wonder if after witnessing the latest developments in Kashmir politics they still hold the same opinion, but I am happy history has vindicated me and the verdict of history is the soundest argument to conclude raging, tearing controversies.

That I might have been at times unkind, harsh or bitter in passing my remarks in regard to Abdullah is possible. But I have always said unreservedly what I honestly felt. Since our historic meeting in Chashma Shahi Garden in July 1932, I have considered him to be a friend, our sharp differences notwithstanding. And to me sincere friendship consists in telling unvarnished truth as one sees it.

The conventions of the Nationalist workers which were held in the Valley during the autumn were organised by the Communists and the principal speakers at these gatherings were also the Reds.

Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed expanded and completed his Cabinet when he found that he had been able to cow down his brave countrymen to a considerable extent. The following are its members :

(1) Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed	Prime Minister
(2) Ghulam Mahammed Sadiq	Education Minister
(3) Girdhari Lal Dogra	Finance Minister
(4) Mir Qasim	Revenue Minister
(5) Sham Lal Saraf	Development Minister

Sadiq is a self-confessed Communist; Dogra and Qasim. are well-known fellow-travellers. Under inspiration of the Communists who dominate his councils Bakhshi is profusely making

statements to create aheaven on earth in the State. He is equally generous in his promises to the peasants and landlords, to the debtors as well as the creditors, to the consumers and the producers, to the officials and their victims, to the Hindu communalists and the Muslim nationalists. It will be a miracle if he fulfills even a fraction of the pledges that he has given. But even if he is successful to perform that miracle the uncertainty about the future of the State is bound to foil his attempts to improve the economic or social conditions of the people. No conceivable device can make the Kashmiris feel restful and composed so long as the accession dispute is not amicably settled.

Bakhshi has become notorious for his atrocious behaviour as the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of law and order. He is a scowling, big shouldered, six foot bully who is frequently seen with a *danda* in his hand. He has publicly belaboured, insulted and disgraced persons who disagreed with him. He has read upto 9th standard, is imposing by nature, uncouth in behaviour and a perfect bluff. In the history of Kashmir he resembles Purna, the barber, whom Haider Shah brought to power during his days of rule. In the National Conference Bakhshi was never given any more important position than that of a swashbuckler whose services were utilised by Nationalists when they wanted to fight political opponents by *goondaism*, till Nehru took a fancy for him. An ex-salesman of Khaddar Bhandar, Bakhshi, in the earlier part of his public career, earned his livelihood by dubious means. Like the historical barber he has mostly misused his power with which his Congress patron undeservedly equipped him. "We demand every one in Kashmir to think like us", Bakhshi declared in a big gathering of distinguished citizens which was held in the spacious hall of the Kashmir Valley Food Control Department in spring 1948. "Those who refuse to do so have no place in this country. We are determined to oust them." Bakhshi has done all the strong arm jobs and I have no doubt in my mind that like Purna this man also would have impaled and executed all his opponents without a moment's hesitation but this is twentieth and not the fourteenth century. Nevertheless whenever he got a chance he has used the most

bestial methods in crushing the fighters for freedom of Kashmir. He has chosen several sadists to torture patriots in detention.

Having demoralised opposition in the Nationalist ranks against himself Bakhshi called the session of the Constituent Assembly in its capacity as the State Legislature at Srinagar in the beginning of October. Only sixty out of the seventy-four members excluding the Speaker were present and most of the rest were still behind the bars. On October 5, the Assembly recorded its "deep appreciation for the timely action taken by the Sadr-i-Riyasat by his order" dismissing Abdullah Cabinet and "thereafter in inviting Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed to form the present Ministry". The Assembly "pledged its full support to and expressed its complete faith and confidence in the present Ministry".

Nearly one dozen members who attended the session drafted and signed a joint memorandum for presentation to the Assembly in which they questioned the validity of the Yuvraj's conduct in dismissing the Abdullah Cabinet. Being apprised of the move by his private spies Bakhshi ordered his storm-troopers to warn the signatories of the consequences. The memorandum was never presented to the Assembly or even published but four members under leadership of Abdul Ghani Goni moved an adjournment motion in the House on October 5, demanding that Abdullah be given an opportunity to explain his position before the Assembly. Communist Sadiq, Speaker of the Assembly, over-ruled the motion; the four members walked out. And before nightfall all of them were in jail.

The house of cards that had been built by the Congress leaders and the Government of India in Kashmir was demolished by Abdullah. It had to be rebuilt at any cost. Huge funds were kept at the disposal of Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed to pacify the enraged Kashmiris. The new Prime Minister of the State introduced reforms that could catch imagination. It was announced that no *mujwaza* would be procured from the peasants ; the system of *khush kharid* was abolished ; education was again to be free and no fees were to be obtained from students. In order to lower the prices of food grains

rice and wheat were imported from the East Punjab in large quantities. For the first time under the Nationalist regime Kashmiris got their staple food in abundance and on cheaper price.

Repeatedly in his public utterances Bakhshi claimed that the new Government could introduce these reforms because of its efficiency and sympathy for the poor people which the previous Government lacked. Some of Bakhshi's colleagues said that it was also the result of generosity of the Indian Government. But what was the truth ? On December 15, Dr. K.N. Katju, Home Minister, Government of India, cryptically informed the Indian Parliament that the Central Government had advanced a fresh loan of rupees ninety-two lakhs to Kashmir "to meet the deficit in the Budget". So the State people were enjoying these amenities at their own expense ; the personality of Bakhshi was being built with the money of the tax payer; there was no magic wand with which the reforms were implemented.

The real character of the new Nationalist Government was revealed by certain steps which Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed took and the utterances he made during the first five months of his rule. Immediately on taking over charge he abolished co-education in the schools. In his address to the convention of the Nationalist workers at Anantnag on October 28, he observed : "I do not agree with the view that we should open schools everywhere. It will harm our country. By educating himself a peasant is deprived of his ancestral work. His mentality is changed and he is rendered unfit to labour on land".

In the sphere of fundamental rights Bakhshi did some thing worse. He converted the whole State into a prison house for his opponents. In the beginning of December last Yuvraj Karan Singh, Sadr-i-Riyasat, promulgated an ordinance at the advice of his new Ministry according to which "the Nationalist Government can at any time release a person detained under Section 3 of the State's Public Safety Act for a specified period". Under the provisions of the ordinance the release order can be cancelled any time by the Government. So in the "New Kashmir" of the Nationalists jail will be the real home for all patriots,

freedom lovers and critics of the Government. When released temporarily the sword of arrest will be hanging over them. What a freedom the people of Kashmir have attained by acceding to India !

Bakhshi and his supporters claim that the new Ministry has worked wonders in the sphere of administration and economic life of Kashmir during the brief period they have been at the helm of affairs. In a Press interview on December 8, the Yuvraj said: "I am happy at what has been achieved by the Premier and his colleagues during the first four months. It reflects great credit on them. The people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh now feel they can go ahead on the road to progress as one team with fissiparous tendencies well counteracted". The Sadr-i-Riyasat stated that "the general improvement in the economic conditions all over the State in the last four months had shown what can be achieved when a Government really concentrates its attention on solving the people's problems." But what are the facts? Let two of the staunch supporters of the new regime say.

Writing on December 14, 1953 under the caption "Guardian of the People", the *Chand* of Jammu observed :

> "Five months have passed when the new Prime Minister assured the people that corruption will be eradicated. But what is the condition today.? Corruption continues as before. In the Revenue, Forest and Police departments there is the same old high handedness. People are complaining as in the past. The warnings, instructions and orders from the Government are absolutely ineffective".

On December 13, 1953 the *Martand* wrote :

> "Now nearly six years have passed but the fate of Kashmir and its people is hanging in the balance. Both the U. N. and the Security Council have failed to settle the dispute. There is strange uncertainty and there are disheartening conditions in the country which have adversely affected our economics and politics. We find obstacles in the path of reconstruction. Works of progress cannot be executed without worry. Our trade is paralysed; our business has flagged; capital is congealed. Neither a local man nor an outsider can be persuaded to invest capital because everyone is labouring under fear as to what will happen tomorrow or what will turn up next about the future of the country. How long and till when can such a situation be endured ? We feel like one who has been buried alive; who is merely breathing but has

lost power of motion and consciousness. Such a man cannot live long and even if he lives he is a burden on the world".

Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed thinks that it is as easy to reconstruct the economic structure of the country as to consign patriots behind the prison bars. Prices of all the necessities of life barring food grains (which are subsidised by the loan secured from the Government of India) are quite high. In the beginning of December Bakhshi issued a stern warning to profiteers and businessmen to sell all commodities at moderate rates; else he would deal with them harshly after a week. "What has happened to the warning", wrote *Martand* on December 12. "Go to the market and see for yourself who has truimphed, profiteer or the warning ? People believed that after the week's time the prices of meat, milk, curds, oil, fuel and other necessities would come down, but not one but two weeks have elapsed the hope of decrease in prices has proved groundless".

In his characteristic irresponsible manner Bakhshi announced in his public utterances at the time of assuming charge of Premiership that the new Government will abolish customs cordon. The traders forthwith suspended importing goods in anticipation of an order to this effect. Prices of commodities rose sharply. There was hue and cry in all parts of the State demanding abolition of the customs. But this was beyond Bakhshi's power. The Government had therefore to issue a Press *communique* saying that for the present there was no intention to abolish the customs cordon in the State.

The State economy can be reconstructed and set right only by the peaceful settlement of the accession dispute. No bold declarations, cheap demagogy or impotent threats can help to improve the conditions. Until this truth is realised by Indian Imperialists and Kasmir Nationalists the State people will continue to suffer.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

MUSINGS ON THE FUTURE

"Such is Kashmir the country which may be conquered by the force of spiritual merit but not by armed force".

—**Kalhana in Rajtarangini, 1, 392**

THE struggle for the freedom of Kashmir is still going on. Today we are faced with the accession issue. It is a minor problem in the context of the titanic war that Kashmiris, like all nations of the world, have been engaged in since the dawn of history. But to us of the present generation the issue appears more formidable than anything else. Our forefathers must have viewed contemporary problems that they had to face from time to time in the same way. When we read about those problems today in the pages of history we feel how meaningless they were. Not many years after a similar view will be held about the accession issue. Yet it certainly is an impediment in the path of the fighters for freedom and has to be solved before we can proceed any further.

The accession dispute has become complicated by remaining unsolved for six years. After having sacrificed immense wealth and lives of thousands of her young men to capture the precious possession will India, like a truthful and peace-loving country which she claims to be, implement the international agreements embodied in the U.N. Resolutions of August 13, 1948 and January 5, 1949, regarding the holding of an impartial and free plebiscite to get the dispute settled ? If India continues to remain recalcitrant and obstructionist will Pakistan despite her economic and political difficulties or weaknesses in defence submit to the dictates of the Indian leaders regarding accession of the State and can her rulers stand the internal pressure if Kashmir continues to be retained forcibly by India ? Will world opinion remain indifferent and unconcerned if India flouts and violates

the international agreements under any pretext however unplausible, and can U.N. survive the shock ? Lastly will Kashmiris accept the present position as *fait accompli* and sheeplike surrender before the forces of tyranny, barbarism and cruelty that the Nationalists have let loose in the country under the fostering care of Indian imperialism ? Such and many more similar questions are revolving in the mind of all thoughtful men who take any interest in the future of the State.

The unreliability of the Nationalist clique has exasperated the peoples and leaders in India if not also Nehru. The wranglings of the Muslim Conference leaders in Azad Kashmir have made Pakistan rulers sick of the State. The people of Jammu and Kashmir on both sides of the cease-fire line suffer untold hardships and indescribable miseries due to insecurity of the present and uncertainty about the future. As the Special Correspondent of *Hindustan Times* reported on May 31, 1953, "Kashmiris are unable even to attend to the repairs of their houses" due to these conditions. It is the false sense of prestige of power politicians that has brought the matters to such a pass. Will they realise even at this late stage the immorality of their attitude and by ending the dispute in an amicable and friendly manner save not only Kashmir from the catastrophe and ruin that prolongation of the demoralising conditions will entail but also protect the two already bruised parts of the subcontinent from the unnecessary and avoidable strife, turmoil, huge waste and possible war ?

The U.N. efforts having failed to solve the problem finally the latest move is to get it settled through direct negotiations between India and Pakistan. Meetings were held by the two Prime Ministers in London and Karachi which were of preliminary and exploratory nature. But no progress was made and but for the robust optimism and unyielding spirit of Mohammed Ali the negotiations might have broken down. While a date was being fixed for a third meeting Abdullah was dismissed by Yuvraj Karan Singh and Bakhshi was installed in his place as the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. The gigantic uprising in the Valley which followed the change-over reminded

the outside world includiug India and Pakistan that Kashmir was a powder keg which could burst any moment with serious consequences for all concerned.

Nehru and Mohammed Ali were forced to meet on August 17-20, in New Delhi many days in advance of contemplated date for the third meeting, to earnestly consider the problem. The talks were not entirely fruitless; the ice appeared to have begun to melt. The Prime Ministers agreed "to fix some kind of provisional time table" for the holding of the plebiscite and in pursuance of this desire they decided that "the Plebiscite Administrator for Kashmir be appointed by the end of April 1954". According to the *communique* that was issued at the end of the talks the Prime Ministers also agreed to consider and decide "certain preliminary issues before this date." These issues were not specified in the *communique* but presumably related to such matters as withdrawal of forces, preparation of electoral rolls and the return of the refugees. It was stated that the Governments would be advised in this respect by "a committee of military and other experts." The *communique* said that on "the Administrator's formal appointment and induction into office by the Jammu and Kashmir Government he will examine the situation and report on it. He will then make such proposals as he thinks proper for preparations to be made for holding of a fair and impartial plebiscite".

These agreements were most welcome and heartening to the people of the State and peace lovers in the subcontinent and indeed in the whole world. But with the bitter experience of the past six years no Kashmir patriot can yet be very optimistic about the final settlement. More weighty agreements were signed early in 1949 by the Governments of India and Pakistan. One of them was that Admiral Chester Nimitz would be the Plebiscite Administrator. Obviously he has become *persona non grata* with the Indian Government today. "Admiral Nimitz is a historical memory", declared Nehru in a Press Conference while giving his views on the fresh agreement. "I have almost forgotten all about him." If Nehru can so easily forget all about one solemn agreement there can be no guarantee that he can remember another if it suits him to erase that too from his

memory. So it is very well to hope for the best but fighters for freedom should always remain prepared for the worst. Unless and until the last vote is polled and counted in the promised plebiscite it is wise to be vigilant and fully equipped to face the formidable forces which are ever ready to sabotage the agreements over Kashmir and produce deadlocks.

In accordance with the Delhi Agreement the Experts Committees of Pakistan and India met at New Delhi in the last week of December 1953. A joint Press note issued by them on December 29, said that "satisfactory progress has been made in examination of the issues." In the Press note the following were listed as the items that came up for discussions :

(1) The quantum of forces to be maintained in the State ;
(2) local authorities to be in charge of the administration in area west and north of the cease-fire line ;
(3) Safeguarding of fundamental rights in the State as required under the U.N.C.I.P. Resolution of August 13, 1948 ;
(4) Creation and maintenance of a peaceful atmosphere, particularly with reference to the Kashmir dispute ; and
(5) Mechanism for certifying that tribesmen and Pakistani nationals have been withdrawn from the State in terms of the U.N.C.I.P. Resolution of August 13, 1948.

While the two Experts Committees were examining the preliminary issues in New Delhi a fresh storm was raised by Congress leaders in India over the U. S. A.—Pakistan Military Aid Pact which was reported to be under consideration of the two Governments. In his speech in the Indian Parliament during the foreign policy debate Nehru went to the extent of saying that such aid would change the whole context in which these (Indo-Pakistan) agreements were made. He specifically mentioned the agreement for a democratic solution of the Kashmir dispute and sought to make out that India was eager and willing to hold an impartial plebiscite to decide the State's future, but now that final solution of the problem was within sight Pakistan had started talks for military aid with the United States, and therefore, compelled India to consider the necessity of repudiating the agreement

I have no desire to enter into a discussion on the merits and demerits of a military alliance between U.S.A. and Pakistan ; but it is obvious that if unhappily Pakistan intends to get Kashmir by force it is because she has become hopeless of a peaceful solution. Nehru's attitude is very strange, almost pathological. Under one pretext or another he delays a peaceful settlement of the dispute and gives the impression that he wants to grab Kashmir by hook or by crook and when exasperated people of Pakistan raise the cries of *jehad* or the rulers of Pakistan attempt to strengthen their military position he makes it an added excuse to become intransigent.

Nevertheless war between India and Pakistan cannot bring freedom or democracy to the victimised millions of the State. There are many people in Kashmir on both sides of the cease-fire line who either due to impatience or helplessness think that war alone can decide the issue. It is difficult to predict the outcome of clash of arms between two countries in the modern world. But whoever might be victorious in the end of one thing we can be quite sure from the start ; Kashmir will be totally ruined like Korea. And the winner will treat the State as a conquered country and not on terms of equality. The method by which Kashmir is liberated shall tremendously influence the future of the people of the State. If the accession dispute is settled by the democratic method of an impartial and free plebiscite we shall be on road to freedom; but if unfortunately the armies of India and Pakistan decide it on the battlefield we are sure to become the slaves of the conqueror. Let us not be foolish to enslave ourselves.

A large number of Kasmiris have been, from the very start of the dispute, looking towards the U.N. and Pakistan for a settlement of the problem and emancipation of their motherland. This helpless attitude has weakened the freedom struggle. Such people ought to realise that neither the one nor the other can prove of much help if Kashmiris do not strive to help themselves.

It should never be forgotten that the fight is between Indian Imperialism and Kashmir democracy, between the rulers of India and the people of Kashmir. Nehru is responsible for

what he does to the people of India. Hostile opinion in Pakistan does not worry him. Indeed, it strengthens his position among the communal and reactionary Hindus. Adverse comments in world Press on his Kashmir policy may make him uncomfortable but these cannot dislodge him from power. So long as he has his countrymen behind him he can conveniently stick to his guns, flout the international agreements and refuse to do justice to Kashmir. In India no party, not even the so-called leftists, want to stand by Kashmir democracy. All of them demand that Kashmir should be retained by armed might and the people of Kashmir should not be given the right of self-determination. Only, different parties clothe their intentions in different words and phrases to pacify their agitated consciences. But the aims are identical—the enslavement of the people of Kashmir. "Final decision on Kashmir problem", demanded Golwalkar, the R.S.S. chief, in a speech at Nagpur on August 24, 1953, four days after the conclusion of Nehru-Ali talks, "should not be left to the people of Kashmir. The opinion of the entire country should be taken in deciding future of Kashmir".

Jan Sangh leaders dislike all talk about the plebiscite. "The accession of Jammu and Kashmir State to India is final and irrevocable", stated Mauli Chandra Sharma, acting President of the Sangh, in Bikaner on September 9, "and any talk of a plebiscite is poisonous and uncalled for."

The Hindu Mahasabha leaders are more plain spoken. "Any talk of plebiscite", advised V. G. Deshpande, general secretary of the Mahasabha, in a Press conference in Bombay on September 14, "to decide the fate of Jammu and Kashmir should be firmly resisted and the Kashmir case should be withdrawn from the U.N. organisation. The accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India should be treated as final and irrevocable." The Mahasabha leader did not make any bones about the reasons for suggesting this course. He said : "The Mahasabha is convinced that an overall plebiscite will mean loss of both Jammu and Kashmir to India," It means that since the State people do not want to remain with India they should not be granted the right of self-datermination and should be yoked to

the Indian chariot by force.

It may be argued that R.S.S., Jan Sangh and Mahasabha are communalist bodies; therefore their views cannot be said to represent the better mind of India. Let us see what the so-called progressives and leftists have to say in the matter.

The Servants of India Society has the long tradition of being liberal and progressive in its views. But so far as the Kashmir dispute is concerned its members, who have grown grey in fighting for the democratic rights of the Indian people, also consider it unpatriotic to remain behind in the race for jingoistic adventure. "I am completely, thoroughly and 100 per cent opposed to a plebiscite", declared P. Kodanda Rao, a well known luminary of the Servants of India Society, on September 11 1953. In order to outshine the Hindu communalist politicians, he added: "It is a highly evolved democratic technique and I would not advise it even in cities like Madras and Calcutta, leave alone Kashmir. The plebiscite might even lead to butchery of innocent masses as during partition. Therefore I would say even war is better than a plebiscite," Members of the Servants of India Society might be regarded as anachronistic statesmen ; but many will hold that Indian Socialists are not so. They claim to be above religious, racial and geographical prejudices and to be fighters for the freedom and advancement of the peoples of the world in bondage. But what is the attitude of the Indian Socialist leaders towards Kashmir ? "A plebiscite is no solution of the Kashmir issue," declared Ram Manohar Lohia, general secretary of the P-S.P., in Lucknow on August 23 : "The principles of secular democracy and that of ascertaining the wishes of the people are in conflict in Kashmir. I believe in democracy but if democracy created difficulty in the task of creation of a common nationality of Hindus and Muslims, then I would attach more importance to that task." It is such irrational views and not the sane and sober comments of the world Press or the cries of *Jehad* in Pakistan that weigh more with the rulers of India.

The U.N. is under the domination of Big Powers. None of these Powers is above reproach. Every one of them has one

or more skeletons in the cupboard. Britain dominates Malaya and British Guiana by armed might ; France maintains her sovereignty over Tunisia, Indo-China and Morrocco by ruthlessly putting down the local freedom movements; America is supporting puppets like Syngman Rhee and Chiangkai Shek to be in the saddle against the wishes of their respective countrymen. Russia is notorious for her concentration camps and suppression of free thought. The occupation of several States in Eastern Europe by Red Armies against the wishes of the local patriots is well-known. Why should Nehru or the Government of India be afraid of the U. N. composed of such Powers ? So long as the prominent members of the U. N. have their own hands stained with the blood of fighters for freedom it is futile to hope or expect that the world organisation can speak with authority and force which come from moral superiority. If U.N. has failed to get its own resolutions on Kashmir dispute implemented and the issue solved finally the reason lies in the moral weakness of Big Powers.

Fighters for freedom in Kashmir should not forget that we are living in a world which is at present dominated by people who believe in the principle of might is right. Reason, justice and morality are not among the guiding principles of present-day rulers. Barring a few honourable exceptions the rulers in almost all the countries of the world suffer from the disease of chauvinistic nationalism. It is mere accident that in the case of Kashmir dispute Pakistan often talks reason and demands justice. We should recollect that it was Pakistan which first started the pernicious practice of accepting the will of ruler as the sufficient condition of accession of a native State to India or Pakistan. Many days before Hari Singh decided to accede to India Nawab of Junagadh had declared his decision to join Pakistan and signed the Instrument of Accession which was willingly accepted by Jinnah. Only if Pakistan had been militarily strong enough the people of Junagadh would have been passing through the same trials and tribulations as those of Kashmiris today. Therefore Pakistan is not as innocent and democratic as it appears to be. The truth is that in this

world every wielder of power poses to be a perfect democrat when it suits him and serves his purpose, but when the principle of democracy or justice harms his selfish interests he turns his back on it and behaves like one whose mind is closed to reason and who is as afraid of democracy as of a serpent.

In a world full of such immoral rulers and politicians, it is not easy to get justice or liberty. A nation has to undergo severe ordeals before it can attain these objectives.

Those Kashmiris who look towards the U.N. for the emancipation of their homeland would do better to grasp this stern reality. Lest there is any misunderstanding I must hasten to add that it is not suggested that world opinion is of no value or U.N. has done nothing to help us. As a matter of fact I think that a delegation of three or four intelligent, well-informed Kashmiris should visit Lake Success and important capitals of the world to explain the Kashmir issue to statesmen and cultured and politically conscious people in general. I only want to emphasise that U.N. by itself cannot secure liberation for us.

If U.N. cannot emancipate Kashmir much less can Pakistan do so. I fail to understand how the cry of *jehad* in Pakistan can persuade the rulers of India to seek an amicable solution of the Kashmir problem. By advocating the extremist policy of *jehad* or war on India extremist leaders in Pakistan might become popular in their own country; it might raise baser passions of backward Muslim masses; it might be successful in exciting hatred of Pakistanis against the Hindus. But it leaves the Indian leaders unaffected. Indeed such is the condition of mass psychology at present that unpopularity of an Indian leader in Pakistan makes him a greater hero in his own country. When passions run high in both the countries the chances of a fair settlement recede far into the background. The cries of *jehad* in Pakistan only strengthen the position of those sections in India who are against any settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

Nevertheless it would be unfair not to add that there are saner publicmen in India, though very few in number, who are sincerely anxious to see that Kashmiris are afforded the full freedom to decide their own future. Sensible Pakistanis and

Kashmiris should strengthen these elements in Indian public life and help them to assert themselves. The best way of doing so is to make non-Muslims feel at home in Pakistan and also to establish friendly and cordial relations between the two countries. If Pakistan leaders instead of threatening India occasionally with the cries of *jehad* adopt this saner and sober method of dealing with the problem. Hindu reactionaries and chauvinists will weaken and the few genuine democrats will become stronger. That will proye really helpful to Kashmir. That will facilitate the task of the Government of India to come to a settlement.

Nehru's observations on the Kashmir problem are a jumble of irrational, contradictory and irresponsible utterances. Time and again he has declared that the accession of the State to India is complete legally, constitutionally and morally. But at the same time he has been assuring the world that the final word about the future of Kashmir rests with the State people and they will be given the freedom to express their will by the democratic method of an impartial plebiscite. To Nehru there appears no contradiction in this though to ordinary people endowed with reasoning the two statements cannot go together. That is not all. Gandhian nationalism and Congress secularism were dead on the day when Indian leaders agreed to the partition of the subcontinent. Nehru himself buried it and wrote its epitaph on June 3, 1947 when addressing the country from the All India Radio he advised the people to accept the Mountbatten Plan as inevitable. Having failed to thrust the spurious secularism and fraudulent nationalism on 450 million Indians he is now engaged in making two million people of the Kashmir Valley suffer as guinea pigs to prove his already exploded fad. "We have always considered", he told the Indian Parliament on September 17, 1953, "this Kashmir problem as symbolic for us as having far-reaching consequences in India. Kashmir was symbolic for us to illustrate that we were a Secular State, that Kashmir with a majority, a large majority, of Muslims nevertheless of its own free will wished to be associated with India". What Nehru failed to achieve all over the subcontinent where for thirty years his guru, the Mahatma, along with thousands of well-trained disciples preached his gospel, he wants to accomplish in

Kashmir. Hypocrisy and insincerity can go no further. Nehru told the Parliament: "It (the Kashmir problem) had consequences both in India and Pakistan, because if we dispose of Kashmir on the basis of that old two-nation theory, well, then obviously millions of people in India and millions in East Pakistan would be powerfully affected". This sounds like the familiar voice of a die-hard conservative politician of Britain in pre-Independence days. Because there was the danger of civil war in India if the white men withdrew therefore the subcontinent must continue to remain in bondage. This was the stock argument of Churchill and those of his ilk. Like all imperialists Nehru forgets that sovereignty of a people is inviolable and freedom of a nation is supreme and most sacred.

This bogey of renewed disturbances is raised in India by those who want to grab the Valley by hook or by crook. If the proposed plebiscite is held on regional basis and not for the whole State as a unit there is no reason to fear that there will be any exodus of population or any problem of refugees. But suppose there are some disturbances is that any weighty reason to deprive the State people of their right of self-determination? Are these solemn assurances to the people that the final word about the future of the State rests with them only an eye-wash?

The truth is that so far as Kashmir is concerned Nehru has lost reason, lost vision and lost humanity. But neither threats of *jehad* nor show of force can cure his mental and spiritual sickness. Persuasion and sweet reasonableness from the side of Pakistan and iron determination to liberate themselves in the people of the Valley alone are the two medicines that can remedy the malady. If somehow Nehru's balance of mind about the Kashmir problem is restored it will not only emancipate the downtrodden State people but it will also be a service to India, Pakistan and indeed to the whole world.

It is for this reason that the policy of friendly approach launched by Mohammed Ali, Prime Minister of Pakistan, deserves the support of all peace-loving people of Pakistan. It is obvious that even if the rulers of India are willing at heart to get the Kashmir dispute settled democratically they will

never be prepared to carry out their intentions so long as the public opinion is strongly against it. Whatever his initial mistakes Nehru is now faced with a frankenstein of his own creation. The monster can be destroyed by the combined efforts of all peace-loving people in the subcontinent. So like realists and lovers of democracy it behoves Pakistanis to follow a path which alone can emancipate Kashmir and not foolishly resort to such methods as will defeat their own purpose.

Evidently the main task is to be accomplished by the Kashmiris themselves. Despite the heroic way in which the patriotic people of the Valley have resisted the imposition of the Nationalist rule it cannot be denied that the administration in the land and the foreigners in occupation carry on because many Kashmiris both educated and illiterate Hindus as well as Muslims, are co-operating with them. To achieve emancipation greater organisation and tougher resistance is needed. Armed rebellion is out of the question. Under the existing conditions such a course is highly inadvisable and is bound to harm the victims more than the enslavers. But there are ways much more efficacious than the armed revolt. If all Kashmiris are determined not to co-operate with the Nationalist administration the Indian Imperialism and its stooges cannot function even for a single day. But to make such a non-co-operation movement a success a better, wider and stronger organisation of fighters for freedom is needed than we have at present. If the different political parties, groups and associations working in the Valley for the cause of democracy pool their resources together and rally round one banner the organisation required for the ultimate success can be established. The strength and intensity of Freedom Movement in Kashmir will prove more effective in persuading the Indian public to come to terms than the cries of *jehad* across the border. Indian leaders should be made to realise that no threats, no coercion and no blandishments will move Kashmiris to abandon their grim resolve to throw away the yoke of an imposed Government. That alone will make Imperialist India see reason.

The leaders of Azad Kashmir probably owing to fear of losing popularity vie with each other in demanding that Pakis-

tan should declare war on India to liberate Kashmir. "Even if it amounted to suicide", declared Ibrahim in a Press conference in Karachi on August 28, 1953 "the Azad Kashmir people will go to the help of their oppressed brothers". Such outbursts might express impatience, exasperation or even rage but it is not statesmanship and it surely cannot help the people of the Valley. There is only one way that the Azad Kashmir leaders can bring the day of deliverance of the Valley people nearer. They should abandon the unseemly scramble for power, come closer to each other and pooling all their resources together build a model free State in the areas now held by Pakistan so that Kashmiris may feel strongly desirous of joining it.

Azad Kashmir leaders should also become realists and support the holding of the plebiscite on regional basis so that the non-Muslims are assured the same right of self-determination which is demanded for the State Muslims. Those who want to enslave others do not deserve to be free themselves.

It is unfortunate that due to the partition of India on the religious basis the Kashmir struggle also has, at any rate in the eyes of the outsiders, assumed a communal complexion. There are many leaders of Azad Kashmir who, totally ignorant of the past history of the Valley, try to give it that colour. Religious fanaticism is foreign to the Kashmir culture and any one who overlooks this essential point is bound to fail to tackle the State politics successfully.

Kashmir has been subject to foreign domination for many centuries. Alien Muslims, Mughals, Afghans, Sikhs and Dogras have ruled the country in succession for more than six hundred years. For the major portion of this long period the people have known very little of peace, progress or prosperity. Political suppression of the intellectual classes and the cruel exploitation of the masses has been the rule. Noble, sympathetic and benevolent masters have been rare. But despite the most intolerable conditions, Kashmiris have struggled manfully against odds for their emancipation throughout the long period. This struggle has taken different forms as suited the times. But whatever might have been the complexion of the struggle one significant peculiarity of this war of liberation which is of

utmost importance to us in this age of sectional bias and communal fanaticism is that it was invariably prompted less by ideas of religion and more by patriotic sentiments so that all classes of Kashmiris without considerations of caste or creed have stood shoulder to shoulder in the ranks of the fighters for freedom. The history of Kashmir tells us that when a ruler became tyrannical and the patriotic politicians saw the deliverance of the country in ending the regime there was no question of what religion the ruler owned; he had to be dethroned for the good of Kashmir and both, Muslims as well as non-Muslims, put their shoulders to the wheel to achieve success and reach the goal. Thus it was that the corrupt Hindu rule was ended in the fourteenth century and a Muslim was crowned as the first Sultan of Kashmir with the goodwill of the local politicians the preponderating majority of whom at that time was Hindu; thus it was that Kashmiris, both Hindus and Muslims, begged Akbar to come and end the rule of the Chaks; thus it was that in 1818 the barbarous Afghan rule was overthrown and Sikhs invited to occupy Kashmir by a Pandit nobleman in co-operation with the Mussalman feudal lords. Today in the moment of their great misfortune of having a fascist regime inflicted on them when the whole subcontinent of India has attained independence, the people of Kashmir, without consideration of caste or creed, are united again. While Muslims like Abdullah, Beg, Bakhshi, Sadiq and Sayid have stood on the side of Hindu imperialism, Hindus like Prem Nath Bazaz, Shyam Lal Yechha, Kanhya Lal Kaul, Jagan Nath Sathu and Pitambar Nath Dhar *Faani* have loyally stood by democracy and the poor, tyrannised and tortured Muslim masses. However hard the Congress leaders and their mighty Press may try to boost Kashmiri renegades as great revolutionaries and fighters for freedom; whatever devices they may contrive to show that the Nationalists stand for progress of the country, the State people can distinguish between their friends and foes.

In the iron determination of people of the Valley is hidden the real cause of Abdullah's failing courage which ultimately brought about his dismissal and arrest. For six long

years he fought against Kashmir democracy. He had the unlimited resources of the great Indian Republic at his disposal. Like all ambitious opportunists he was deluded that he could crush the urge for freedom among his countrymen and rule like a despot. At the beginning of every new year he used to make a fresh resolve to accomplish this task but at the end of the year he found to his dismay that the forces of Kashmir Freedom Movement were more formidable than what he knew they were twelve months earlier. The result was that his hopes forsook him and he faltered.

The people of India if not their rulers should have benefited by this experience and instead of putting up another shameless opportunist to do the tedious and ignoble job, they should have done justice to Kashmir and afforded full freedom to the State people to do as they like. But the Hindus in India appear to have an infinite capacity for self-deception. Amazingly forgetting the developments in Kashmir during past six years they are today applauding Bakhshi in the same manner and with the same vehemence as they did Abdullah in 1947-48. But is there any reason to believe that Bakhshi can prove successful and loyal where Abdullah faltered and failed?

Like Abdullah six years ago Bakhshi is today making bold and unequivocal statements pledging Kashmir's "irrevocable and final" accession to India because of the "ideological affinity of the two countries". "The State's ties with India are unbreakable", he assured a gathering of 15000 Dogras on August 8, in Jammu at Museum Ground, the same spot where addressing a big congregation on November 17, 1947, Abdullah had made a solemn declaration that the Nationalists were going to make Maharaja Hari Singh "King of the whole State". Bakhshi added: "We remember the promises we have made to India and to you. Our intentions are honest. We will keep those promises. The hand of friendship we have extended to India will remain there. No one will be able to say that Kashmiris have backed out". Like his fallen predecessor again Bakhshi, referring to the impending plebiscite, declared: "People should not be apprehensive about it for we shall always win; this country shall be ours

and it shall always remain ours". The Hindu audience cheered and raised the cry of *zindabad* as they did six years ago. And the Hindus heaved a sigh of relief hoping that Kashmir is now safe for India and secularism will flourish in the Valley.

But the Congress under the leadership of Nehru has decided the fate of the State regarding its accession on the day it accepted the partition scheme (Mountbatten Plan). No sensible man can now find any substance in the sophisticated arguments of the Indian Premier that the subcontinent was divided on any other than the religious basis when he knows how Bengal and the Punjab were partitioned. It is futile to believe that Kashmir Muslims can easily think of joining India so long as Pakistan is in existence. By his ill-conceived methods, Nehru is in no manner strengthening the forces of secularism in the State. He is indeed undermining the foundations of this creed in Kashmir. The more he insists on keeping the corrupt, unpopular and power-hungry Nationalists in the saddle with the Indian bayonets to back them, the more he is creating a revulsion against secularism in the minds of the State people, particularly the Muslims. Nehru may or may not realize it but by his short-sighted policy, the very names "secularism" and "nationalism" are falling into disrepute with Kashmiris. If secularism has any chance to grow in Kashmir it will come only, when the people have the fullest freedom to decide their own future and forge their own fate. Secularism cannot flourish at the point of bayonet.

The future of the new Prime Minister can be no better than that of the one who has been put behind the bars. In the din and bustle of propaganda we should not forget that the Hindus expect Bakhshi to fully integrate Kashmir with India. That is why extremists like N. C. Chatterjee, President, Hindu Mahasabha, Mauli Chandra Sharma, President, Jan Sangh, no less than the Congress leaders have unstintedly supported the new Government and asked their followers to co-operate with it. Bakhshi may be too ready to fulfil the desires of the Hindu expansionists. But it is not within his power to accomplish the task. Where the popular emotions of a nation are

concerned it is beyond the capacity of an individual or a clique to go against them and survive, much less continue to administer the country. Why did the powerful British leave India to be ruled by its own chosen representatives? India in bondage did not have any national army to frighten her imperialist masters. But she had one weapon mightier than all armies. It was the deep-rooted emotional urge for freedom. Similar is the case today in Kashmir. Bakhshi might say anything to please his patrons and make any wild and irresponsible statement to whip up enthusiasm in India in support of his unwanted and hated regime, but the truth is that he too is conscious of the intensity of the public opinion in the Valley against the integration of Kashmir with India. Otherwise there is no reason why he should persistently demand that the autonomy guaranteed to the Kashmir people by Article 370 of the Indian Constitution and the provisions of the Delhi Agreement should remain intact. The National Conference convention which met in Srinagar on September 15, to support the new Ministry emphatically declared : "We will preserve the autonomous status of our State within the Indian Union: We will resist with all the forces the idea of merger". If India is really secular and progressive there should be no ground for Nationalists to be apprehensive and they should not stress to remain aloof in any form. But Bakhshi while acclaiming the secularism of India has been simultaneously strident about autonomy and the preservation of the special status. In fact he and his colleagues have been more vociferous about the latter in their speeches in the Valley ever since they assumed charge though as a matter of policy full reports of these speeches are not sent out for publication in the Indian Press. "So far as the question of merger is concerned", Bakhshi convinced the Nationalists in a meeting on December 3, in Mujahid Manzil, "we have unanimously opposed it, we oppose it now and we shall continue to oppose it. I want to state it clearly that from whichever side there is demand for integration or merger it will be vigorously opposed".

In Kashmir history is repeating itself. The Indian leaders and the Indian Press are deliberately conniving at this double

dealing of Bakhshi just as they did in case of Abdullah for a long time. But the conflict between the Hindu nationalism and Kashmir Nationalism is bound to continue. Before long the extremists in India will begin to press for the complete integration of the State; they will be supported by all Hindus including the Congressmen. Speaking at a public meeting in Jammu on November 2, 1953 Prem Nath Dogra announced that the Parishad had not withdrawn the agitation unconditonally. "National considerations compel us to keep silent for some more time. If the assurances given to us are not fulfilled we will have to launch a fresh movement". Like his fallen predecessor Bakhshi shall have to choose. If he resists or even wavers to carry out the wishes of Hindu nationalism his loyalty will be suspected and he will be dislodged from power. But if he proves more pliable as is expected and as in all probability he will, then the safety valves in the shape of the guarantees in the Indian Constitution for the preservation of the autonomy of Kashmir will soon disappear and the clash between Hindu nationalism of India and Muslim nationalism of Kashmir will accentuate with such dreadful consequences as no one can foretell. But whatever might or might not happen it is sure no puppet Government can remain in saddle for a long time under such explosive conditions.

Many Hindus believe that if the Constituent Assembly of the Nationalists ratifies State's accession to India the dispute will end. They forget that the Assembly enjoys no representative character and is by nature of its composition the general council of the National Conference in another garb. If the repeated ratification of the State's accession to India by the general council could not end the dispute how can a resolution of the Constituent Assembly to that effect do so.

If Kashmir remains with India against the will of the State's people it will always find itself in political turmoil. One puppet will succeed another but no Government will be stable. Finally there will be enough reason for the President of India to use emergency powers, suspend the Constitution and instal his own rule in the State. Kashmir can never move towards freedom in such circumstances.

Unless the Nationalists realize their mistake and try to understand the essence of secularism they will make this noble creed more and more hateful in the eyes of their own followers as well as the people of Kashmir. It will be no wonder that in their ignorance the Nationalists might eventually come to hate secularism themselves and openly revert to the side of Muslim communalism from which they originally sprang. But that will be no fault of secularism. Nor will that end the movement for the spread of secularism in Kashmir.

It is tragic that of all people in India the Congress leaders should be instrumental in subjugating Kashmiris by might of armed military. For more than thirty years the Congress waged a titanic war against British Imperialism under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. All patriotic Indians in general and the Congress leaders in particular know how enraged one feels at the loss of civil liberties and human rights; how galling it is for a self-respecting citizen to know that his country is occupied by foreign forces which defend an irresponsible, unpopular and fascist Government in his motherland. Let the Congress leaders recollect the days when British viceroys and satraps ruled by the mailed fist. How did the Indian fighters for freedom feel when the alien white masters used to triumphantly assert that all they did was done in the interests of the people of India. Let Congress leaders remember that it is no defence to say that things in Kashmir are different because the present-day rulers in the State are local Muslims. Did not the British appoint Indian rulers under them some of whom were renegade Congressmen ? Did that meet with the approval of India ? The question is not if Kashmir is ruled by local Muslims, however boosted; it is if the rulers are the true representatives of the State people. So long as the freely chosen leaders are not placed at the helm of affairs Kashmir will remain sullen and disturbed.

There is another aspect of the Kashmir problem over which all peace-loving Indians should deeply ponder. Kashmir can be an asset to India only if it is happy and satisfied; if the Kashmiris know that there is no coercion and that they are not asked to do anything against their will. Rebellious Kashmir will prove

a drag, a liability on India as it has done during the last six years. There are wishful thinkers who believe that Kashmiris will change their mind and attitude if they realize that India is not going to give up its occupation on any account. That is against what the political history of India teaches; that is a false hope. Let such people learn a lesson from the British India would have attained independence in any case but she would have never remained within the Commonwealth had the British not realized in time that it was good for them to leave India and allow her to freely choose her rulers. Even the die-hard Conservatives possessed the realistic sense to understand this. Whatever hardships he may have to suffer a Kashmiri will never become a *zulum parast* (worshipper of tayranny) again.

Having critically watched the developments in India and Pakistan in post-independence period and being convinced that accession to either country would retard the progress of free Kashmir many of the fighters for freedom sincerely desire to establish an Independent Kashmir with the blessings of the Big Powers and guarantees from the U.N. For their own reasons the disillusioned Nationalists under the leadership of Abdullah also timidly advocated that goal which resulted in their dismissal from office. An Independent Kashmir would be the best solution from all points of view provided it could be practicable under the present-day conditions. Perhaps the idea could be upheld in 1947 but then the power-hungry Nationalists killed it.

It is evident that situated as it is Kashmir cannot defend its frontiers against foreign aggression. Paper guarantees of the U.N. will be meaningless. There is no international force composed of the members of all the Big Powers in existence at present. So if the U.N. agrees to protect the Independence of the State Britain or America shall have to station her armies in the Valley. That will be a sufficient cause for the Communists from the north and east to swoop down upon the country. The example of Korea is there. Therefore it will be no independence; it will be a direct road to annihilation of our beautiful, beloved and ancient land.

Another proposal put forth in certain quarters about the settlement of the dispute is that the whole State of Jammu and Kashmir might be kept under condominium of India and Pakistan for a period of ten years after which the State people may be allowed to decide by the method of an impartial plebiscite whether they want to accede to India or Pakistan. Realising that owing to the political developments during the past six years the national prestige of both the countries has got involved in the dispute and people on either side tenaciously hold to their respective views and cannot look at the problem in an objective and dispassionate manner, there is much to commend in the condominium proposal and it certainly is worthy of consideration by the leaders of India and Pakistan as well as by the people of the State. If the plan can be found practicable and workable it should be given a trial. Kashmir under an arrangement of condominium can bring the two people of the subcontinent closer in brotherly relations; it can also end the bitterness that was created by the tragic events at the time of partition and which has persisted to this day. But there is also the danger that in the prevailing psychological atmosphere the condominium might prove a cause of friction. For, the short-sighted communalists, religion-ridden fanatics and unscrupulous politicians in both the countries will be as active during the transition period as ever. Peace in Kashmir and the progress of the State are not in their book. They are out for mischief and trouble. And in a State under condominium more than anywhere else moderation, patience and tolerance will be needed among all the parties concerned to make the plan a success. In any case the proposal should not be foisted upon the State people ; they should be given the fullest liberty to decide if they want to be under condominium.

Accession to India or Pakistan may not be entirely without detriment to our right of self-determination and autonomy but it is in the present-day world preferable to the so-called independence of Kashmir.

Given freedom it is probable that Kashmiris will choose to join Pakistan. Liberal Indians and lovers of secularism need

not fear that perspective. The fear is caused by the obsession that the Nationalists hold the monopoly of secularism and progress in Kashmir and when the State accedes to Pakistan these will be things of the past. But as has been shown during the course of this survey the torch of secularism and democracy is in other than the Nationalist hands and it will not be easy for the rulers of Pakistan to extinguish it. No sensible man in Kashmir believes that the State will attain complete freedom by acceding to Pakistan. Kashmir fighters for freedom do not believe that the present-day Pakistan is an ideal State for a man to live in. They are fully and painfully conscious of the reactionary elements in the body politic and social life of that country and of how the progressive movements are suppressed there. But the question before the people of Kashmir, overwhelming majority of whom is Muslim, is, can they progress smoothly by joining India where Hindu nationalism is in ascendance or by acceding to Pakistan where Muslim nationalism rules? The choice for the State Muslims is evident enough ; they will opt for the latter.

The Kashmir democrats support this reasonable attitude in the justifiable hope that by doing so the fight for complete freedom in Kashmir will become easier and clearer. If Kashmir remains with India against the wishes of the Muslim majority the Hindu-Muslim tension will become a chronic disease in State politics; it will never allow the basic problems to come to the fore and the case of democracy will become a forlorn one. On the other hand if the dispute about the accession is decided freely and fairly to the entire satisfaction of the people, genuine secular and democratic forces are bound to raise their head and come into their own, sooner or later. That is the chance for secularism to grow. True democrats in India should allow such developments to take place and should not support the fascist rule of the Kashmir Nationalists to continue. Moreover, with the settlement of the Kashmir dispute, other differences between India and Pakistan will be easily solved and thenceforth both countries will begin to live normal lives like two neighbours and friends. That consummation devoutly wished having been

attained appeal to religion in political and economic matters will begin to lose force. And it will open a broad avenue to progress and prosperity in both countries.

Geographically Kashmir stands at a place which is surrounded by as many as six countries inhabited by different people with diverse cultures. They are Russia, China, Tibet, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. This position, strategically of great importance, has proved both a curse as well as a blessing for Kashmiris from immemorial times. The high mountains surrounding the Valley on all sides have not always blocked the way to adventurous armies and marauding hordes as is frequently stated. Enemies have come from north, south, east and west to plunder the peace-loving people and subjugate them. The far-famed scenic charm of the land and the beauty of Kashmiri women have been a source of perennial attraction to the adventurers. But Kashmir has also been a meeting place of the best minds of the neighbouring countries. Time after time new waves of thought and philosophy have come over the mountains into the Valley to get absorbed in the accumulated culture of the people. It is the time-honoured tradition of a Kashmiri to patiently hear new views on any subject of human interest. He is not intolerant or fanatic by nature. He loves to hear new ideas and absorb new truths. This is the corner stone of the cultural edifice which has been built through ages with tremendous labour by his ancestors, Whatever be his faults in character, a Kashmiri is neither narrow-minded nor a bigot. Kashmiri Muslim has more in common with local Pandit than he has with an outsider Muslim. The same can be said about the Pandit. He feels more at home with a Kashmiri Muslim than with a non-Kashmiri Hindu. In dress, language, tastes, ways of living and mode of thought Kashmiri Hindu and Muslim share almost everything. Both bigotted Hindus and Muslims from outside have jeered at them for their unorthodox ways but unmindful of these taunts Kashmir people have followed their self-chosen path unfalteringly It will be a tragedy of the first magnitude if any change now destroys this invaluable cultural achievements of the peace-loving people of the Valley.

In the subcontinent of India the Valley of Kashmir is the most fertile land where the seeds of secularism and democracy can germinate and grow with ease because it is in the nature of the people to welcome revolutionary ideas and accept new truths from wherever they are imported. Neither Buddhism nor Islam was foisted upon Kashmiris. It was spread peacefully by the zealous, unostentatious, simple and sympathetic missionaries of the new faiths. By becoming converted to Islam Kashmiris have not lost the trait of open-mindedness in their character which they have inherited from several thousands of years. If there are a few hundred devoted missionaries of democracy in the Valley now Kashmiris can be liberated from the spiritual, political, economic and social thraldom.

Abdullah failed in his mission because opportunism did not allow him to fully grasp the implications of the new revolutionary faith which he professed to espouse. He wanted to be both a mullah and a secularist at the same time. He preached religion from the pulpit at Durga Shariff and democracy from the platform of the National Conference. The counterfeit secularism of the Congress permits it but where religion and politics are mixed together a social democratic revolution cannot fructify.

It is true that the overwhelming majority of the people of Kashmir have religious affinity with Pakistan and if Kashmiris have to choose between the Hindu nationalism of India and the Muslim nationalism of Pakistan they will vote for the latter in preference to the former. But to any student of Kashmir history there should be no doubt that the people of the Valley have evolved through ages a distinct culture of their own which they are loath to part with. They are also justifiably apprehensive of outside interference in their domestic matters. Whatever the result of the impending plebiscite Kashmir wants to preserve her ancient ties with all her neighbours including India and Pakistan. Before the plebiscite is held both the Governments of India and Pakistan should make a solemn declaration that accession will be permanent only in respect of three federal subjects viz., Foreign Affairs, Transport and Defence. The people of Kashmir should in future enjoy fullest autonomy in

their educational, political, economic, cultural and social matters. This declaration should be ratified by the U.N. and no central government should have the power to make any amendments in its provisions.

India has from time to time made pronouncements regarding her relations with Kashmir which we have critically examined in this book. But Pakistan has maintained a studious silence. It is incumbent that a joint declaration should be made by both countries guaranteeing our autonomy before the plebiscite is held. This will prove reassuring to the fighters for freedom and will also hearten the people who are rightly suspicious of outside exploiters whether Hindus or Muslims.

Not all the leaders in Pakistan who denounce the occupation of Kashmir by Indian armies as aggression and demand the liberation of the State people, are genuinely distressed at the suppression of Kashmir democracy. Many of them are only dreaming of turning the charming Valley into a colony for wealthy classes in Pakistan. To them Kashmiris are born to be slaves, the only regrettable factor is that they should be under Hindus and not Muslims who, because of identity of religion with Kashmiris, should have been their masters. If the Valley decides to accede to Pakistan the fighters for freedom shall have to protect their homeland from becoming a victim of the pernicious longings and rapacity of these false friends.

Most of the opponents of the Nationalists ardently desire to overthrow them not because they have formulated better plans to set up democracy in Kashmir; they want to wield power as despotically as the Nationalists are doing or roll in wealth like them. Their only regret is that they do not have some share in the administration or the loot which have unexpectedly and suddenly fallen to the lot of the Nationalists. They yearn to see the day when they would get the opportunity to rule over the Kashmir people. I am sure such "patriots" will prove no less cruel, ruthless, tyrannical and anti-social. How can any fighter for freedom have sympathy with these power-hungry politicians. If we want to liberate the people from the slavery of the Nationalists and the thraldom of Indian Imperialism we

must take care that the new rulers are not worse.

Accession one way or the other will remove an obstacle but it will not solve all our problems. During the past six years the Nationalists have functioned in such an irresponsible and unpatriotic manner that the fabric of the social, political and economic life in the country has been disrupted. Those who inherit this bankrupt State—bankrupt in every respect—shall have to solve formidable problems and it might take many years before the country is put on its legs to enable it to enjoy the benefits of a good administration.

The aim of the Kashmir Freedom Movement is not capture of political power by any party or glorification of any individual. It is the complete freedom of the common man. We want to see every Kashmiri free so that he may live happily and get the fullest opportunity to unfold his potentialities. No leader however gifted and great can by himself attain this goal for the people. It is the people in co-operation with each other who can struggle for it and attain it. But so long as they are steeped in ignorance and believe in a mysterious destiny, demagogues, opportunists and fortune-hunters will exploit them and betray them.

Today Kashmiris on both sides of the cease-fire line are frustrated because the high hopes the leaders had raised in them have remained unrealized; the dreams have proved illusory ; old despots have been replaced by new tyrants. While the people have become poorer the leaders are rolling in wealth. Why has all this happened, and will it happen after the accession issue is solved ? they ask. So long as the people remain steeped in ignorance there is no remedy for this. If one set of leaders are exposed, another set will come to the fore to take their place. After some time those also will be found with clay feet and again a new process of disillusionment will start. It will be an unending game of cheating and exposure on the one side and disillusionment and frustration on the other. If the freedom of the people is to be achieved mass ignorance, intellectual backwardness and spiritual slavery must be destroyed by dissemination of knowledge.

It is false to state that a country is democratic when the people are steeped in ignorance. In such countries demagogues flourish and rule in the name of democracy. We have bitter experience of it now at a tremendous cost. Intelligent, selfless and spiritually liberated souls are not respected in backward communities. A country desirous of becoming free must fight ignorance, superstition and prejudice. It is only when hero-worship is replaced by self-reliance, blind faith by intelligent understanding and ignorant belief by critical discrimination in a people that it can be said of them that they are equipped for real democracy which will lead them to the goal of freedom.

The culture of our country has stagnated during the last few centuries. The Religious Humanism taught by Lal Ded and Nund Rishi is misread, misinterpreted and misapplied all over the Valley today. The basic truths taught by the two master-minds have not only to be rediscovered and reclaimed from the mass of superstitions, myths and miracles that have been woven round them; they have also to be interpreted in the light of the revolutionary discoveries of science in the past three hundred years. Humanism now stands on a firmer foundation of reason and no longer needs the support of religion or an unseen power. Man is the master of the universe and he has the power to make himself. He is not a plaything in the hands of any supernatural force but an architect of his own future. Unless a mental revolution is brought about in the people of Kashmir by popularising this philosophy of life which may be called Scientific or Radical Humanism it is futile to hope that we can establish a democratic set-up or that our country can be free or that it can progress. The first step towards the ideal of freedom is the intellectual and spiritual regeneration of our people. When this is achieved political and economic progress will follow as the day follows night. That is what has happened at the advent of each new era in the history of Kashmir. In the twentieth century it cannot be otherwise.

There are three ways open to us to reach our destination. The first is that of Gandhian secularism followed by the Nationalists. Despite its high-sounding slogans and specious platitudes

it is basically nothing better than the pernicious doctrine of Brahmanism in a modern garb.

The second path is of Islamic democracy so applauded by the leaders of the Muslim Conference. This will lead us to the fanatic rule of the mullahs and religious bigots. Religion had revolutionary significance in bygone ages. But in modern world it has ceased to be a force binding peoples of different countries together. Economics and ideological or intellectual kinship has become the link that today unites nations. The Muslims of the subcontinent who secured Pakistan by raising religious slogans in the pre-partition days had fondly hoped that after partition they would be able to strengthen Panislamism and knit all the Muslim countries into a solid and secure bloc. But it has proved a groundless hope. "The bond of common religion", confessed *Dawn* in December 1953, "has not proved as effective a cementing link for political purposes, as had been once hoped even between Pakistan and other Muslim countries". It is good that fighters for freedom in Kashmir learn a lesson from the disillusionment of Pakistani Muslims.

Scientific Humanism is the third path shown by the Kashmir Socialists. This philosophy is in complete accord with the cultural heritage of the people of Kashmir. It incorporates the essence of modern science and philosophy with the noble truths that we have inherited from our forefathers.

In their history of thousands of years Kashmiris have followed the three paths during different periods and known the results. Brahminism was practised in its truest form during the days of Mihirgula when under the king's patronage reaction and death ruled the Valley. Sikandar, the But Shikan, was the champion of an Islamic State. What that meant the readers of this book know very well. Humanism was the ideal of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin Bud Shah. There has never been a more glorious progressive and prosperous period in the otherwise dismal history of the beautiful Valley in the medieval times than the fifty-two years rule of that great and noble monarch.

We are living in a unique period of history. We have the privilege of the new possibilities of translating our dreams into

realities. In the ancient and medieval times our ancestors were born in a land which was no doubt envy of the whole world. But it was not within the power of even Bud Shah to derive benefits from all its resources. Today science has made available to us those opportunities and we can build a free Kashmir. Now man can remake himself. But the prerequisite to attain that ideal is a mental revolution which can be brought about by the spread of rationalist philosophy of life among the people of the Valley.

Fortune-hunters may be after power but those who are in search of freedom should devote their entire energy to awaken the people from the slumber of ignorance. It is no doubt an uphill task and a tortuous way to reach the goal. But by seeking short-cuts a fighter for freedom is only lengthening the period of his struggle because there exists no other way than the one indicated.

In this fight for cultural regeneration of the people it is the educated middle class who will lead the country. Kashmiri Pandits are the most suited members of our society who can become the vanguard in building a free Kashmir. Many Hindus believe that if the State accedes to Pakistan Pandits will be forced to leave their ancient homeland. I have no desire to ignore or even minimise the difficulties that will face non-Muslim minorities in the State in the beginning after the change. But I have no doubt in my mind that Pandits have yet to play a glorious role in the building of Free Kashmir; only liberal statesmanship on the part of future leaders is needed to make it possible.

In 1934 when we were at Lahore in connection with our political work Abdullah told me that Dr. Mohammed Iqbal strongly advised Kashmiri Muslim leaders that they should cultivate best relations with Pandits. The father of the Pakistan ideology was of the view. Abdullah informed me, that Pandits were essentially patriots and would play a prominent role in building the State if they are assured of a decent and honourable living and a secure future. There is remarkable elasticity in the Kashmiri Pandit character. A Pandit can promptly adjust to changed circumstances. If the Kashmir Muslims are just and generous

and maintain the traditions of the noble culture so deligently nurtured by Bud Shah there is no reason why Pandits should bid good-bye to their land of birth even if Kashmir accedes to Pakistan. It is a disservice of the Nationalists to secularism as well as to Islam that by their misdeeds they have terrified Pandits who have run away in thousands during the past years. An unsophisticated Hindu naturally believes that if Muslim secularists are so intolerant and short-sighted as the Nationalists what good can be expected from non-secularist Muslims as the leaders of the Muslim Conference. It will be long before the people in general and Pandits in particular will begin to learn that the Nationalists are neither secularists nor even true Mussalmans. They are power-hungry politicians, fortune-hunters and opportunists.

Unhappily it is the deliberate policy of the Press in India as well as in Pakistan to prove that while minorities in their own respective countries are treated generously the minorities across the border are passing through a period of severe ordeal and gruelling experience. This picture is not wholly true. In India it is generally believed that no Hindus are left in West Pakistan now. If Hindus of Kashmir feel unnerved at the prospect of the State acceding to Pakistan and think that the only alternative for them to save their lives is to migrate to India there is nothing surprising in it and one should not attribute it to their dread of the Muslim majority, I think it will be a service to Kashmir if some facts about West Pakistan are brought to the notice of Kashmiri Pandits.

The population of Hindus in the province of Sind is four and a half lakhs. On November 15, 1951 the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan increased the number of seats for Hindus in the Sind Assembly to ten on the basis of one per 45000 when it was detected that their population in the province entitled them to it. In April 1951 Mr. N. G. Motwane, Secretary of the Sind Seva Samiti, Bombay, wrote a letter to Nehru requesting him "to ascertain from the authorities in Karachi if they would welcome Sind Hindus back to Sind." In a statement Mr. Motwane said: "Sind Hindus—many of

whom are living in camps—are anxious to go back to their lands and villages and continue their old careers. I request the Prime Minister to kindly help us to go back to our homes".

Here are two news reports published in the *Statesman*, New Delhi, the first from its Special Correspondent and the second from P.T.I. Reuter:

> **Peshawar, October 2, 1948**
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> Reports reaching here say that Dusserah was celebrated yesterday in the tribal areas, the Frontier States and in the province where a large number of Hindus are living under perfectly normal conditions. The celebrations passed off peacefully and were marked by fraternal greetings from Muslim friends and neighbours".
>
> **Rawalpindi, October 1, 1948**
>
> About six hundred Hindus observed Dusserah here today in the customary way by burning a twelve feet high effigy of Ravana and staging the centuries-old events related in the Ramayana. About three thousand Muslims watched the celebrations, it was learnt.

Such reports have appeared year after year in the Press during the past six years.

In September, 1950, a goodwill deputation of the Frontier Hindus led by Mr Amir Chand Bombwal, convener, Frontier Minorities Peace Mission, and consisting of representatives of all six districts of the North Western Frontier Province was organised with the purpose of finding out the possibility of the repatriation of the Frontier Hindus and Sikhs to their ancestral homes. "Wherever I go", wrote Mr. Bombwal in a letter to the Prime Minister of N.W.F.P., "people eagerly inquire as to when the scope of the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement is going to be extended to the rest of India and West Pakistan so that they can also return to their former homes. The reasons are obvious as the Frontier Muslims and Hindus have no quarrel of their own and the majority community always remained friendly and traditionally generous towards the minority". Mr. Bombwal sought the support of Congress leaders to his proposal before proceeding to Karachi and Peshawar. Afterwards nothing was heard about the fate of the proposal. Probably there were insurmountable obstacles in the path of repatriation of those who had already left their homelands. Nevertheless it is clear from these facts that many Hindus live in West Pakistan and

that it is not impossible for Kashmiri Pandits to live in the ancient Valley if the majority decides to accede to Pakistan.

How long it will take to smash the Nationalist Fascism in the Jammu and Kashmir State nobody can predict. The Nationalists have betrayed Kashmir. The leaders of the Muslim Conference have proved petty-minded men who in anticipation of liberation have been quarrelling among themselves for the shares of spoils. Instead of relieving the miseries of Muslims they have proved instrumental in adding to their hardships. The Kashmir Socialists are numerically weak and backed neither by the Government of India nor by the Government of Pakistan. Thus having become helpless and hopeless a wave of pessimism, frustration and demoralisation is sweeping the country. Nevertheless the urge for freedom in the common man is manifest and irrepressible. The leaders might have failed him but the energy to fight for liberation is present today in a Kashmiri as ever before.

It is wrong to look towards India, Pakistan or even U.N. for our freedom. No nation has been set at liberty by any outside agency however benevolent or mighty. We must canalise and organise the energy born of the urge for freedom in our people. If that is done a tremendous power can be generated to defeat Indian Imperialism and Nationalist Fascism which have co-operated to enslave us.

Ultimately the fate of Kashmir will be decided by its people, peacefully if India and Pakistan arrive at a settlement, by violent methods if constitutional means are denied to them for long. Today conditions in the State are explosive and fraught with grave danger. It will be the greatest tragedy in the history of the State if violence breaks out on a large scale and the people resort to terrorist methods to wipe out despotism and corruption; it will make the immediate future of the peace-loving Valley bleak and dismal. No well-wisher of Kashmir likes to see that evil day. But those in India who complacently believe that with the presence of the Indian troops some day things will return to normal, are consciously or unconsciously sowing the seeds of that great tragedy. There

have already been sporadic attempts at violence. News about these has been deliberately suppressed in India. It is therefore time that all liberals, democrats and believers in peaceful progress should assert themselves and force the Government of India to change their policy with regard to Kashmir.

If the Kashmir problem is solved amicably before conditions deteriorate beyond control Kashmir might become the much needed bridge over the gulf of differences that has yawned between the two sister States. Kashmir can become either a source of perennial friendship or a cause of eternal enmity and war between the two countries. It is for leaders of India and Pakistan to decide what they want to make of it, a beautiful common pleasure garden where the fusion of the Hindu and Muslim cultures can fructify into noble humanist culture or a battle-ground for the two communities and the two countries. Whether Kashmir Valley goes to India or Pakistan of one thing there should be no doubt that the future progress and prosperity of this beautiful land depends on good neighbourly relations between the two countries.

Whatever be the settlement of the accession problem speaking for myself and all those who think like me, we yearn to see Kashmir progressing as an autonomous unit of the subcontinent inhabited by freemen—free in every respect, politically, socially, economically, intellectually and spiritually.

We desire to see Kashmir again becoming seat of learning and culture, haven of peace, mother to Children of the soil and refuge for victimised, persecuted and tyrannised without consideration of faith, colour or nationality to which they belong.

We aim at a Kashmir where everyone can think and live without any fear and enjoy fullest opportunities for self-development; where all restrictions have been removed on the unfoldment of individual personalities ; where people are self-reliant and look towards no power, seen or unseen, for assistance; where no religious, racial or sectarian prejudices poison the mind; where reason alone guides thought and behaviour ; where women have ceased to be under bondage ; where there are

no privileged classes or communities; where education is free and open to all; where religion is no stamp of privilege; where birth is no disqualification for enjoyment of human, social or political rights; where all men and women get equal opportunities for growth; where capitalists or vested interests do not oppress the toiler; where political demagogues do not exploit the masses; where mullah and fanatic do not thrive at the expense of the ignorant; where dogmas do not dwarf intellect; where poverty is a thing of the past and the masses are well-fed, well-clothed, well-housed and contented.

We want to see every Kashmiri earnestly in search of truth, thirsty for knowledge, sceptical, inquisitive yet tolerant of views however unacceptable to him.

To us man is the measure of everything for he is the root of mankind. We therefore judge of a society by the conditions in which man and woman live and not by the shibboleths and slogans of those who rule over them.

It is not an easy task to achieve this high ideal. We are fully aware of the tremendous difficulties that we have to face to reach the goal, Our struggle is hard; it shall have to be waged for years may be decades. But we have realised that there is no shortcut to reach the destination. If therefore during the life time of the present generation we can only set our people on the right path by making them grasp the nature of the struggle and the nobility of the ideal we shall have done our duty and we can die in peace.

THE END

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To us man is the measure of everything for he is the be-all and end-all. We therefore judge of a society by the condition of each man and woman living in it and not by the symbols and rituals of those who rule over them.

It is not an easy task to achieve this high ideal. We are fully aware of the tremendous difficulties that we have to face to reach this goal. Our struggle is hard; it shall have to be long; our steps may be laggard. But we have realized that there is no short cut to reach the destination. If therefore during the life-time of the present generation we can only set our people on the right path by making them realise the nature of the struggle and the grandeur of the ideal we shall have done our duty and we can die in peace.

THE END

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